



**Models for Excellence
in Second Language Education
DIMENSION 2003**

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Jessica Ramos-Harthun
Denise M. Overfield
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Teresa Pérez-Gamboa
Lara Lomicka
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Southern Conference on Language Teaching
and the Foreign Language Association of Georgia

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Review and Acceptance Procedures **SCOLT *Dimension***

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in the proceedings volume of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) begin with the submission of a proposal to present a session at the SCOLT Annual Conference. Once the members of the Program Committee have made their selections, the editor invites each presenter to submit the abstract of an article that might be suitable for publication in *Dimension*, the annual volume of conference proceedings.

Only those persons who present *in person* at the annual Joint Conference are eligible to have written versions of their presentations included in *Dimension*. Selected members of the Editorial Board first evaluate abstracts of the proposed articles. Those whose abstracts are accepted then receive copies of publication guidelines, which follow almost entirely the fifth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Once the articles are received, the names and academic affiliations of the authors and information identifying schools and colleges cited in articles are removed from the manuscripts, and at least four members of the Editorial Board and the co-editors review each of them. Reviewers, all of whom are professionals committed to second language education, make one of four recommendations: (1) publish as is, (2) publish with minor revisions, (3) publish with significant rewriting, or (4) do not publish.

The editors review the recommendations and notify all authors as to whether their articles will be printed. As a result of these review procedures, at least three individuals decide whether to include an oral presentation in the annual conference, and at least five others read and approve each article that appears in *Dimension*.

2003 SCOLT Editorial Board

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Introduction

By selecting “Models for Excellence in Second Language Education” as the 2003 conference theme, the Board of Directors of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) demonstrated an eagerness to invite from our colleagues at all levels, K-12 through post-secondary, presentations describing successful programs in one or more language areas. Through the use of the term “second language,” as opposed to “foreign language,” we further hoped to reinforce our commitment to the belief that language study must be respected as an integral part of mainstream education and not be treated as a peripheral field of study.

The article that opens the present volume provides a smooth transition from SCOLT’s focus on technology at our 2002 conference to this year’s “Models for Excellence” theme. In “The Transnational Classroom: Connecting People, Languages, and Cultures,” Lourdes Sánchez-López and Jessica Ramos-Harthun describe an innovative summer project in which two groups of students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) communicated with one another through cyberspace. Participants in a study-abroad program in Costa Rica shared both their firsthand observations and personal reactions to life in the Central American republic, while students enrolled in a Spanish course on UAB’s home campus explored Costa Rica through research and by reading e-mail from their fellow students abroad. Meanwhile, these same students kept their peers abroad informed with respect to events both on their local campus and in the national news. Because extensive program evaluation confirmed that the experience proved to be fruitful for both groups from a motivational and linguistic viewpoint, it will be repeated with some modifications in the near future.

Discussions of community-based and service learning projects have recently dominated discussions in many secondary schools and colleges. Educators at all levels have sought practical ways through which classroom content and course and program objectives may be integrated through the involvement of students in projects that address specific community needs in realistic ways. Two of the articles included in this volume of *Dimension* discuss such efforts. In “Creating a Language Learning Community Within and Beyond the Classroom,” Denise Overfield describes a Medical Spanish course designed for a group of students enrolled in the first year of the nursing program at the State University of West Georgia. Overfield outlines both the organizational framework established for the experience and the hands-on activities essential to the implementation of the venture. She further provides reflections upon the success of the initial undertaking and suggests ways in which the program might be modified in the future.

Betina Kaplan and Teresa Pérez-Gamboa report on a very different approach to integrating language study into the community through activities beyond the confines of the conventional classroom. In “Stepping Out of the Classroom to Increase Spanish Language Skills and Cultural Awareness,” the authors describe

an innovative project that provided an opportunity for students of Spanish at the University of Georgia to interact with pupils at a nearby elementary school with a significant Hispanic population, thus providing mutual benefits for students at what might normally be considered polar extremes of the educational spectrum.

Subsequent to the initial euphoria surrounding the widespread accessibility of such technological tools as the World Wide Web, e-mail, and chat rooms, there developed in some educational circles the realization that without appropriate monitoring, modern marvels might easily be misused by students and teachers alike. Hardware and software have become increasingly available to language learners at all levels and in most schools, yet many teachers have found themselves perplexed as to how to harness such innovations in the most productive ways. Lara Lomicka, Gillian Lord, and Melanie Manzer provide ample evidence that, far from being merely trendy, the incorporation of technology into the curriculum has become virtually essential to the success of many contemporary second language programs. In "Merging Foreign Language Theory and Practice in Designing Technology-Based Tasks," the authors outline a variety of pedagogically sound tasks easily accessible on the World Wide Web or through Computer-Mediated Communication. The chief value of the article perhaps is that it provides practical advice as to how technology may best serve the needs of the successful language teacher.

Equally concerned with the question as to how to make scientific innovation truly respond to the goals of the modern communicative classroom, Janet Flewelling addresses a very specific dimension of technology in "Creating Narrated Multimedia Presentations in the Second and Foreign Language Class." After providing ample pedagogical justification for the inclusion of such projects in the curriculum, she describes software appropriate for a number of specific activities and suggests assignments appropriate for different levels and groups of students.

No longer content to let the roadmap for one's place in our profession remain as entry through some type of initial certification process and renewal via the completion of a set number of courses at specified intervals in one's career, many states and professional organizations have demanded greater commitment from those who wish to be viewed as committed second language teachers. Carmen Chaves Tesser and Marty Abbott address a timely issue in our profession through their contribution, "INTASC Model Foreign Language Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development." The authors provide background as to how INTASC (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) came into being, explain how it relates to NCATE (the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) and NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) certification, and outline its 10 core principles.

Despite the fervent wishes of numerous educators that those seeking to teach at the K-12 levels would follow "traditional" certification routes, record numbers of novice teachers, particularly in the field of second language education, continue to enter our profession in far less conventional ways. In "Alternative Teacher

Preparation Programs in Foreign Languages,” Anja Bernardy and Elaine McAllister tackle an issue that is at once timely, controversial, and quite unlikely to disappear. The authors provide surprising data and background information documenting the current reality and explain how one institution, Kennesaw State University, has attempted to develop a special program to address both the needs of schools and the willingness of prospective teachers who have not chosen to enter the profession in the traditional way.

Although group study abroad programs for teachers of Spanish are not unique, such ventures most commonly consist of travel to Spain or Mexico, advanced study of language and culture, site visits to well-known locations, and often homestay experiences. Two features, however, distinguish the program outlined by Sue Barry in “Group Study Abroad and Thematic Units”: the fact that it takes place in Peru, a locale far less likely to be visited by Spanish teachers than Mexico or Spain, and the expectation that all participants prepare and share teaching units based on their experiences abroad. Following her reflections upon the model program and some suggestions for possible future modifications, Barry offers as an appendix to her article samples of two of the projects that best demonstrate the objectives of this unusual venture.

The editors of *Dimension* now invite you to read and enjoy this year’s contributions. We are eager as well to have you consider submitting a proposal for a presentation at our 2004 conference in Mobile and, if your idea is accepted, to consider developing the presentation into an article for possible inclusion in next year’s volume of proceedings.

The Co-Editors:

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Acknowledgments

The editors of this volume acknowledge our debt to the many people who have made its publication a reality. The 14 authors of the eight articles printed here, as well as those who submitted the other manuscripts we considered for publication, are to be commended for their willingness to convert conference presentations to articles that both addressed the conference theme and met publication requirements. Anyone who has attempted to make a similar transformation from oral performance to written word will surely understand how significant a task confronted each author. Perhaps more daunting, perhaps, than the creation of the original piece by these writers, was the fact that the various reviewers made numerous suggestions for manuscript revision, even to the extent of suggesting that a few of the articles be completely recast. Yet not one of the authors rebelled at the corrections or recommendations offered them.

We are especially pleased with the work of this year's Editorial Board. From our own SCOLT region and beyond we secured the collaboration of 17 members of our profession from 16 different states, individuals who represent several languages from both the K-12 and post-secondary levels. Each reviewer read carefully several of the proposed manuscripts, made numerous recommendations for corrections, and in some cases prepared copious notes. Several of the authors, including a number of those whose contributions were not selected for publication, asked the editors to express to the reviewers their appreciation for such careful reading and helpful suggestions. The editors can but echo the appreciation expressed by those submitting manuscripts.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, the editors of *Dimension 2003* once again express sincere gratitude to the Administration of Valdosta State University for providing the facilities and resources so critical to the successful publication of this volume and to the goals of our conference.

C. Maurice Cherry and
Lee Bradley, Editors

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Cherry & Bradley, Editors



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The Transnational Classroom: Connecting People, Languages, and Cultures

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The University of Alabama at Birmingham

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Abstract

With the aid of computer technology and students' firsthand experiences, the Transnational Classroom (TC), a pilot innovative project created and developed at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), was implemented in the summer of 2002 for a duration of three and a half weeks. The participants were two groups of students from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures: a study-abroad group in Costa Rica and a Spanish class on the U.S. campus. The main objective of the project was to give the U.S. campus students the opportunity to participate in the foreign culture through their peers' experiences and thereby to raise their desire to participate in a study-abroad experience themselves and to continue studying Spanish. Participants engaged in daily e-mail communication in Spanish and a weekly photograph exchange. As was envisioned, the TC resulted in a positive outcome. Evaluations, journals, and portfolios showed that the "appetite" for study-abroad programs was enhanced, and the students in Costa Rica examined their own experiences with greater appreciation. Following the completion of this pilot project, the original model was revised and modified for future Transnational Classrooms.

Background

Globalization and cultural awareness are terms that most societies address daily at work, at school, and in the community at large. The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project,

1999), in which we find the goals of *Communication*, *Communities*, *Cultures*, *Comparisons*, and *Connections*, were created and defined to delineate what students should know and be able to do in a foreign language. Nevertheless, the teaching tools that many teachers work with and the teaching-learning environment itself are often insufficient to reach these goals.

Today many teachers of language and culture find that technology is a first-rate tool that students can use to reach out to other cultures. It makes a significant contribution to bridging the distance between language learners and the target culture by linking students to other target-culture language speakers and to target-language texts (Gongleswski, 1999). In recent years, numerous studies have analyzed the pros and cons of using computer technology (Cronjé, 2001; Glisan et al., 1998; Goodman, 2002; Semones & Chism, 2001; Spanos et al., 2001; Winer & Cooperstock, 2002), videoconferencing (Palmer, 2001), and e-mail correspondence (Cifuentes & Shih, 2001; González-Bueno & Pérez, 2002; Yu & Yu, 2002) for educational purposes. All such studies generally conclude that the benefits of technology for the language teaching and learning process are numerous.

Acknowledging the fact that higher education's responsibility to educate students about the world is greater than ever (Green & Baer, 2001), the authors believe that study-abroad programs should be continuously promoted. Study abroad is often accepted as one of the best opportunities to use foreign language skills and increase cultural competence beyond the classroom. Yet there are barriers affecting study-abroad programs. In their study, Green and Baer (2001) concluded that 48% of high-school seniors headed to 4-year colleges expressed an interest in studying abroad; however, less than 3% actually participate in study-abroad programs at some time during their college careers. It would be useful to know the explanation for this alarming gap. Is cost the major barrier? Do requirements in many majors prevent credit for study abroad? If students go abroad, is it possible to fulfill the requirements for graduation? Do advisors encourage such experiences?

Lange, Klee, Paige, and Yershova (1998) argue that culture is the core of language acquisition. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges for the foreign language teacher is to engage students actively in the cultural tongue by affording meaningful interaction with native speakers from the target culture. Study abroad in an immersion setting is an effective way to accelerate and increase language proficiency and cultural competence, the main academic goals of a language program. While cultural interaction can be practiced by having a cross-cultural e-mail exchange between keypals from the target country and students of the target language, as proposed by Jogan, Heredia, and Aguilera (2001), the Transnational Classroom (TC) adds another dimension of meaningful interaction. TC connects classrooms or groups of students through daily e-mail correspondence highlighting the benefits of an immersion setting and the "real world" experiences of students abroad. Students on campus can relate to their peers' experiences abroad and vice versa.

Moreover, according to Vygotsky (1978), our interpretation of the world is derived largely from the social environment in which we experience events, an idea that directly connects with the main focus of this study: Language students should achieve cultural awareness, and language teachers should find new and effective ways such as study abroad to promote it.

In agreement with Cifuentes and Shih (2001), the authors believe that social constructivist pedagogy can foster both learning how to teach and language acquisition. At the same time, collaborative learning can foster construction of meaning. And finally, technology can foster collaboration and learning about culture. These three assumptions clearly support the project in that technology, peer teaching, and a study-abroad program become the key elements of a cultural teaching/learning process.

The Project: Description and Method

The TC engaged two groups of students from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB): the study-abroad group in Costa Rica (enrolled in courses SPA 190/290/390/490/590) and an on-campus advanced Spanish conversational group (enrolled in courses SPA 416/516). With the aid of computer technology and students' firsthand experiences, the TC was implemented in the summer of 2002 for three and a half weeks and was designed to reach six primary objectives:

1. To give study-abroad students the opportunity to share firsthand experiences with U.S. campus students through daily e-mail correspondence in the target language while receiving the latest news from their homeland.

Rationale: Having students write in Spanish about their own experiences while they are living them encourages a prompt reflection on and review of their daily activities. Recording their experiences helps students realize the gains obtained within a study-abroad program and makes them appreciate every moment spent. Another of the TC's main objectives is to keep study-abroad students informed about the current news and happenings on both the local and national levels.

2. To give U.S. campus students the opportunity to participate in the foreign culture by sharing the experiences of study-abroad students through daily e-mail correspondence.

Rationale: Despite the interest of students in participating in study-abroad programs, the number of students who actually go abroad is small. The implementation of TC within study-abroad programs will offer U.S. campus students the opportunity to participate in the foreign culture.

3. To increase the desire of students on the U.S. campus to participate in a study-abroad experience.

Rationale: Increasing students' desire to participate in study-abroad programs should be an objective of institutions of higher education eager to enhance global learning. U.S. campus students can easily identify with their keypal partners abroad and thereby more easily visualize themselves as study-abroad students.

4. To engage students in interesting e-mail exchanges in the target language about aspects of foreign culture leading to class discussions that will (a) increase students' real-life vocabulary, (b) improve their real-life conversational skills, and (c) enhance their interest in foreign cultures.

Rationale: The authors are in agreement with Chávez (1997), who believes that if the student is to enjoy writing in the target language, second language teachers should make writing a pleasant experience for the student. By being of the same age group and of the same academic background, students abroad and on campus are able to relate easily to one another and are furthermore encouraged to become involved in peer teaching.

5. To promote multicultural awareness and understanding of the benefits of study-abroad programs.

Rationale: Many institutions aim for global learning or global competence, elements often included in their mission statements, yet few of them have achieved the strategies associated with such goals. The TC is appropriate for a curriculum with global perspectives.

6. To promote peer teaching and learning through continuous student feedback.

Rationale: Nolan, Levy, and Constantine (1996) note that peer education programs are popular, especially because of their cost-effectiveness, role-modeling function, "peer credibility factor," and ability to meet the diverse needs of students. Promoting peer teaching and learning through continuous feedback helps develop the students' responsibility and active involvement in the learning process. Students become more aware of the importance of corrective feedback since they have the chance to be both authors of their own work and editors of someone else's.

The Transnational Classroom in Costa Rica

The Transnational Classroom was implemented within the Study Abroad Program to Costa Rica offered by UAB's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures during the intensive mini-term in May 2002. The group of participants in this program included 12 full-time UAB students, 10 of whom were majoring

or minoring in Spanish. Six students were at the intermediate level, four at the advanced-low level, and two at the novice-high level. At a difficult time for encouraging students to travel abroad because of prevalent worldwide political issues, recruiting 12 students was not an easy task. However, an intense marketing strategy focusing on the attractiveness of the selected country and a well-organized and detailed preprogram plan proved successful. The TC in Costa Rica was a meaningful component of the study-abroad program.

The three-and-a-half-week language immersion program in Costa Rica consisted of four intensive hours of Spanish daily at a well-established institution, the *Centro Panamericano de Idiomas*. The program took place at two different locations of the school: San Joaquín de Flores (Heredia) during the first 2 weeks and Potrero (Flamingo-Guanacaste) during the 3rd and final week of the program. A suburb of Heredia, San Joaquín de Flores is popular among those who wish to be away from the traffic, pollution, and stress of the city yet still want the advantage of easy access to Costa Rica's capital, San José. Students were living with Costa Rican families and had the opportunity to engage in local customs and social activities with their host families. It was essential to screen the host families for size, parental occupation, and interests in order to allow for a better match with prospective students. The Costa Rican institution secured prospective home-stay host families who took an active interest in the participants by providing ample interactions with them. Frequent trips away from the class helped students digest the 4-hour-per-day intensive language sessions at the school. As part of the experiential learning component, students visited the Britt Coffee Plantation and Museum, learning about the history and impact of the coffee industry in the country. They toured the cities of San José and Heredia and visited major tourist attraction sites, including the Poás and Arenal volcanoes, La Paz and La Fortuna waterfalls, the hot springs of Tabacón, and the surrounding rain forest. They also visited Puerto Viejo, a village on the Atlantic coast, and were able to experience the Caribbean culture of Costa Rica. In the final week, the group traveled to the village of Potrero in Flamingo-Guanacaste, on the Pacific side of Costa Rica, to finish the program. Directly on the coast, the setting around the school revealed a more rural and relaxed atmosphere. Thus, students had the opportunity to see and compare different lifestyles of the Costa Rican people by living with an urban family in San Joaquín de Flores and a rural one in Potrero. Afternoon lessons of Latin dance and Costa Rican cooking were also part of the weekly activity schedule. Advanced students conducted oral interviews with local people, personnel in institutions, and individuals in the private business sector on a topic of the students' own interest, selected and approved by UAB faculty prior to departure. The language program was also enriched by structured afternoon group discussions on cultural topics offered by UAB faculty on site.

The students' journals functioned as an extension of the TC by encouraging them to select ideas and report, translate, and transmit all of the experiences abroad to the UAB campus classroom via e-mail. Students used their journal notes and rewrote the most valuable ones for inclusion in their e-mails and reflection papers.

In both form and content, the e-mails and TC reflection papers were ultimately more polished projects than the daily journals. Prior to departure, each student was assigned fixed dates to send one e-mail to the U.S. campus from Costa Rica. Every day for the duration of the program, one student wrote and sent an e-mail to the U.S. classroom and included copies for each of the TC participants and for both professors on site. The e-mails recorded topics such as Costa Rican vocabulary (e.g., *pura vida* or “I’m doing great; life cannot be better,” *mae* or “dude,” *macha* or “blonde girl,” *tuanes* or “too nice,” etc.), typical foods (e.g., *gallo pinto* [rice and beans] and *casado* [meat, rice and beans]), geographic locations and their characteristics (e.g., the Pacific coast vs. the Valle Central and the Atlantic coast, or Flamingo-Potrero, Heredia-San Joaquín de Flores, Limón-Puerto Viejo), climate, life with host families, daily school schedules, social life, folklore, and comparisons between the native and foreign cultures. E-mails included colorful digital pictures of visited areas and excursions, indoor and outdoor activities, classroom activities, recipes for popular Costa Rican dishes, lyrics of songs, and so forth. TC e-mails, photographs, journals, and all material exchanged by both groups were included in final portfolios.

The Transnational Classroom in the United States

The TC was implemented in the Advanced Conversational Spanish class (SPA 416/516) offered in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures during the intensive mini-term in May 2002. The class was made up of 10 undergraduate Spanish majors and 8 graduate students completing work in Spanish education for the M.Ed. degree. The class met 5 days a week, 3 hours a day for 3 weeks. One of the components of the class was the TC, which comprised 20% of the final grade, as was the case for the group in Costa Rica.

All U.S. participants received a daily e-mail from one of the students in Costa Rica. In groups they read the e-mail and discussed it. There were often references to personal experiences and linguistic expressions (e.g., *pura vida*) that the students in Costa Rica had just learned. The e-mails also answered questions that the U.S. campus group had formulated on previous days. Finally, the U.S. students prepared questions for the next day. Some of the questions referred to religious, family, educational, or political issues. As a final step, students discussed in groups the grammar in the messages. Afterwards, they sent feedback to the students in Costa Rica. Everybody received a copy of each of the e-mail exchanges (texts and photographs) to keep all participants and the two professors informed about the ongoing activities at both ends of the TC. There was a Costa Rican map in the U.S. classroom on which U.S. students tracked the study-abroad group in order to have a visual image of location and enhance their geographical knowledge.

With the objective of bringing real-life experiences to the classroom, students had one Costa Rican party per week in the classroom. The first was a tropical fruit party to which each student brought a tropical fruit or drink (e.g., papaya, mango,

guaraná, melon, grapefruit, kiwi, etc.) to share. The second was a dinner party. The on-campus students asked the students abroad to send the Costa Rican recipes that they were learning in their cooking class. Students from the U.S. classroom cooked *gallo pinto* (rice and beans), *papas fingidas* (baked potatoes), *arroz con pollo* (rice and chicken), etc. and brought the food to the dinner party. The third was a farewell party at which students ate Costa Rican food, drank typical Costa Rican juices, and danced to Costa Rican music they had located on the Internet. Digital photographs were taken at each of the three parties and were immediately sent to Costa Rica.

As a final step, students were asked to submit a TC portfolio, which included a compilation of the materials about Costa Rica gathered during the term (e-mails, photographs, maps, music, and recipes) and one reflection paper for each of the 3 weeks.

Results

The TC was evaluated via five different tasks: daily e-mails and discussions, weekly reflection papers, a final oral exam, a portfolio, and a written evaluation form provided to the students in both groups at the end of the project. The purpose of the five tasks was to learn more about students' perceptions of the target culture, their level of knowledge about the target culture after the project had been completed, and their evaluation of the project itself.

Students and professors engaged in daily conversations about the e-mails, which led to intriguing class discussions. Participants in Costa Rica experienced the culture directly, while participants in the U.S. experienced it through their peers from the other side of the TC. In Costa Rica, the last 15 minutes of each language class were dedicated to the TC, while in the U.S., 30 minutes in each class were devoted to it.

Participants were asked to write weekly reflection papers on the TC, which were included in the final portfolio. Students were encouraged to answer honestly, as their responses would allow the authors to gather more reliable information for research purposes. Some of the most repeated positive aspects that participants on both sides included in their reflection papers were that the TC (1) allowed students to get firsthand information about a country without their being present, (2) was an excellent tool for learning language and culture, (3) required the constant use of Spanish for communication with peers, (4) fostered the exchange of cultural information in a nontraditional way, and (5) was fun. On the other hand, participants found some flaws in the pilot experiment. Study-abroad participants criticized the limited computer access and slow Internet connections, felt that the cultural exchanges should be more equitable, and believed that they should be benefiting more from the TC.

As part of the final oral exam, all students were evaluated on their knowledge of the Costa Rican culture as well as of country-specific idiomatic expressions and their general command of the Spanish language. Since the students abroad had

participated physically in the target culture, they were generally more emotional when they expressed their understanding of the culture. On the other hand, the on-campus students talked about their knowledge and understanding of Costa Rican culture from the point of view of an outsider who is very interested in learning more and visiting the country.

The portfolio was a crucial element for evaluating the students and the TC. Participants were given guidelines in order to ensure the inclusion of specific elements: e-mails and photographs from both sides of the TC, recipes, maps, music and lyrics, newspaper articles, and reflection papers. Evaluation of the portfolio was based upon its organization and presentation, adequacy of the commentary provided to the partner abroad, lists of vocabulary and new structures expressed by the study abroad keypal, and reflective commentary on the TC experience in general.

Using a 5-point scale (with “5” being the highest rating), TC participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt the TC component had increased their knowledge and appreciation of cultural diversity and study-abroad programs. As expected, the TC resulted in a positive outcome, as Table 1, below, suggests. See Appendix A for the content of the form.

Table 1

<i>Objectives of the Transnational Classroom</i>		<i>U.S. campus</i>	<i>Costa Rica</i>
1.	To give students studying abroad the opportunity to share firsthand experiences with U.S. campus students through daily e-mail correspondence, while receiving the latest news from their homeland.	N/A	3.5
2.	To give U.S. campus students the opportunity to participate in the foreign culture by sharing the experiences of study-abroad students through daily e-mail correspondence.	5	N/A
3.	To raise U.S. campus students' desire to study abroad.	5	N/A
4.	To have students engaged in interesting e-mail conversations about aspects of foreign culture that lead to class discussions. These discussions will (a) increase students' real-life vocabulary, (b) enhance their real-life conversational-skills, and (c) enhance their interest in foreign cultures.	5	3.8
5.	To promote multicultural awareness and understanding of the benefits of study-abroad programs.	5	5
6.	To promote peer teaching and learning by continuous feedback	5	4

The results of the evaluations clearly suggest one important conclusion: The on-campus group benefited more from the project. On-campus participants gave the highest rating to all the achievements, a reaction that may suggest that they were aware of the fact that they would have never experienced so much real-life foreign culture in a regular language class. The results also indicate that on-campus students appreciated the peer teaching and learning process in which they had been involved and understood its pedagogical purpose. Most importantly, the students' evaluations also show that the desire to study abroad was enhanced among the on-campus students, while students in Costa Rica examined their own experiences with greater appreciation.

On the other hand, ratings of the participants in Costa Rica suggest that they were not completely satisfied with the amount or quality of the information received from the U.S. campus participants; the e-mail conversations that they were engaged in were not as interesting for them as for their peers on the U.S. campus; and they did not feel that they had benefited from the peer-learning process as much as their peers in the U.S.

Reflection and New Suggestions for Future TCs

Jogan, Heredia, and Aguilera (2001) emphasize the importance of cross-cultural e-mail exchange and believe that students' purposeful communication with a peer abroad leads to a sense of continuous discovery and an ongoing gathering of cultural information in an authentic communicative situation. The TC vehicle of exchange or key condition that produced the outcome is technology. Current advances in technology offer new opportunities for foreign language students around the globe to interact in meaningful ways with individuals from the target-language culture. The available technology in this experimental project included e-mail and discussion boards. More advanced technologies such as videoconferencing could be implemented in the future. Despite all the benefits of the continuous exchange, students and professors had to cope with certain technological difficulties that had not been predicted, such as slow Internet connections. In Costa Rica the number of computers at the school was limited, and when students used other facilities, such as the now popular Internet cafés, they sometimes became frustrated by the slow and saturated Internet connections.

The TC is a way to build responsibility among students through peer-teaching experiences. Study-abroad students in the elementary and intermediate levels of Spanish were able to teach advanced U.S. campus students specific vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, as well as cultural issues and knowledge gained during their stay abroad. Most students in the Costa Rican program realized that their role as active participants, witnesses, and reporters of their own experiences was of great value to their audience at home, who were participating in the study-abroad program without being abroad. The on-campus students also realized the importance of providing constructive feedback, support, and updates from home to their peers in the target culture.

In addition, the TC has proven to be an efficient way of promoting and marketing study-abroad programs. When the pilot project finished, all the participants in the U.S. classroom expressed their desire to participate in future programs, and many indicated that they would enroll in the near future.

After having completed the pilot TC, the authors suggest revising and modifying the original model. The experience itself, in conjunction with the students' suggestions and the professors' review of the results, indicates that the following modifications could improve future TCs:

1. Besides e-mail, more advanced technologies such as videoconferencing could be implemented. Because of limited resources and time restrictions, students were unable to use videoconferencing, although this element was part of the original plan. Whenever possible, videoconferencing should be incorporated. Because of the nature of this technological component, videoconferencing could give all participants on both sides of the TC a more visual impression of belonging to the same classroom, where students can see and hear one another in "real time."
2. For longer programs, the U.S. campus students and the study-abroad students could be paired instead of reporting to the whole classroom. One-to-one communication is recommended for a longer study-abroad program since e-mails exchanged could be done once a week. A longer program could foster a deeper relationship among students. However, for short programs, one-to-one communication is discouraged, since students abroad want to spend as much time outside of the instructional environment as possible and are reluctant to spend too much time in front of a computer on a daily basis.
3. Nine of the participants from both sides suggested that meeting the participants from the other side of the TC before the project started would have been very beneficial and would have turned the project into a more personal activity, similar to a friend-to-friend e-mail exchange. Professors could arrange a meeting with all the participants from both groups prior to departure to make the first contact possible.
4. The authors believe that all the language classrooms on campus could benefit from the TC concurrently. Although only one group on campus should be interacting actively in the TC project (to prevent the project from becoming impersonal), the rest of the classes on campus could be receiving all of the information exchanges. In this case, the benefit would be multiplied by as many students as the language program has at that particular moment. All the students could be learning about the foreign culture in a much more intriguing and enjoyable way. Class discussions could be held as warm-ups for every class.

5. The authors believe that further research on how to balance the quality of the exchanges is needed. One potential way of making the experience more equitable could be by implementing a “Research and Find” game, which would be carried out by the participants on the U.S. campus. This game should be based on historical and cultural facts that the on-campus students would research and communicate to their peers abroad for confirmation.

Conclusion

This article has described the creation and implementation of an innovative pilot project that engaged a study-abroad group in Costa Rica and a Spanish class on the U.S. campus, both from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at UAB. For the duration of three and a half weeks, participants engaged in the TC, a cultural and linguistic peer teaching and learning process through daily e-mail correspondence in Spanish and photograph exchanges. Results suggest that, overall, the pilot project was a success in many ways since it achieved most of the objectives of the experiment. However, the authors believe that some revisions, including the use of videoconferencing, pre- and post-program meetings for all participants, and the implementation of the project in a longer study-abroad program should be considered in order to improve future TCs.

The proposed TC provides foreign language teachers an opportunity to re-structure the cultural component of the curriculum for U.S. universities offering a study-abroad program on a regular basis.

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Appendix A

Transnational Classroom Evaluation Form

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

The Transnational Classroom Assessment Summer 2002

You are a graduate / undergraduate student. (circle one)

Please evaluate from 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) the achievement of the objectives of the TC:

- ___ 1. To give students studying abroad the opportunity to share firsthand experiences with U.S. campus students through daily e-mail correspondence in the target language while receiving the latest news from their homeland.
- ___ 2. To give U.S. campus students the opportunity to participate in the foreign culture by sharing study-abroad students' experiences by daily e-mail correspondence.
- ___ 3. To make U.S. campus students want to study abroad.
- ___ 4. To engage students in interesting e-mail conversations in the target language about the foreign culture that lead to class discussions. These discussions will (a) increase students' real-life vocabulary, (b) enhance students' real-life conversational-skills, and (c) enhance students' interest in foreign cultures.
- ___ 5. To promote multicultural awareness and the benefits of study abroad.
- ___ 6. To promote peer teaching and learning by continuous feedback.

Please answer the questions below, using extra paper if necessary:

Did you enjoy the project? Why/why not?

What did you like the most and the least about the TC?

How much did you learn about the foreign country and culture?

Would you like to participate in a study-abroad program in the future?

Do you have any suggestions for future Transnational Classrooms?

Appendix B

E-mail Assignments

Study-Abroad Students:

- 1) Write about trip experiences and excursions (geography, biodiversity, landscape, etc.).
- 2) Journal first impressions about your host family, neighborhood, town, school, people, and the study-abroad group.
- 3) Visit local markets and experiment the taste of new exotic fruits (wash them before eating them!).
- 4) How is your typical daily life with your host family? Compare it with your life at home.
- 5) What are the main cultural differences between Costa Rica and the U.S. (interaction among people on the street, activities during the day, timing, etc.)?

On-Campus Students:

- 1) What are the most important events that have evolved at UAB, Alabama, and/or the United States since the departure of study-abroad participants to Costa Rica?
- 2) Find a Costa Rican informant in the community. Invite him/her to the U.S. classroom to confirm and/or contrast the study-abroad students' perceptions about the Costa Rican culture with his/her own.
- 3) Research country facts (population, type of government, main industry, etc.). Ask the study-abroad group to confirm your findings.
- 4) Initiate a "Research and Find" game by doing initial research, formulating questions, and comparing and contrasting the answers from the study-abroad group with your own research.

2

Creating a Language Learning Community Within and Beyond the Classroom

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Abstract

This article describes an interdisciplinary project that joins a popular curricular model, the learning community, with an increasingly popular pedagogical technique, community-based learning. The combination of the two gives students the opportunity to use language as both an object of and tool for learning, thus situating language at the heart of the learning experience. The development of a learning community creates a curricular space in which faculty and students work together as novices and experts in a specific situation to resolve linguistic and socio-cultural issues. This article presents the field experience of 1st-year nursing students who were enrolled in a medical Spanish class.

Background

The shift in language teaching and research from a structure-oriented approach to one that emphasizes the nature of interaction has been well documented and is largely the result of researchers' having approached language learning from a sociocultural theory vantage point (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Donato and McCormick, 1994; Hall, 1995). This research is based largely on the work of the psychologist Vygotsky (1978), who maintained that social interaction is the essence of learning.

The 1999 *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP]) based on a growing body of Vygotskean-based research, conceptualized this shift by emphasizing a framework for communicative modes (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) instead of the traditional four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These modes emphasize that the form language takes depends greatly on the reason it is being used. As Gifford and Mullaney (1999) point out, the

Standards highlight the social aspect of language by positioning it directly “at the heart of human experience” (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 7).

However, in spite of such recognition of the centrality of language and, therefore, the importance of foreign language learning, classroom practices often do not reflect this priority. In a report of the Language Mission Project, Maxwell, Johnson, and Sperling (1999) declared that “there are compelling indicators that foreign language programs in higher education are in a state of crisis” (p. 46) because of the inability of many programs to make connections that demonstrate the importance of language study within and across disciplines. Maxwell et al. blamed at least part of this problem on time, money, and class size constraints that may hinder even the best efforts of faculty.

The result is that language study may be viewed as something apart from other academic programs and extracurricular pursuits, a perception that is in direct opposition to the notion that language is at the heart of human experience. While the Standards emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of language, particularly in the “Connections” dimension, the reality at the postsecondary level is that the development of beginning language courses that attempt to encompass Standards beyond that of “Communication” are often frustrated.

This article explores how the model of the freshman learning community (LC) may be used to create a curricular space for community-based learning (CBL). By linking the LC model with CBL, faculty members are better able to exploit the dual purpose of using CBL in a language classroom: everyone involved receives multiple opportunities to explore both facets of language and facets of society in a variety of ways. The interdisciplinary nature of language gives language study the potential to become a crucial component of the 1st-year experience.

The Learning Community Model

The LC model may take a number of forms in a university curriculum, and it may do so at any time during a student’s academic career. The discussion here will focus on the freshman LC and its various manifestations.

The freshman LC focuses on linking courses in the core curriculum with a select group of students. One way that this focus can be achieved is by designating a certain number of seats (25, for instance) in a series of large courses and allotting these designated spaces to the same group of 1st-year students taking those classes. In this manner the same group of students will enroll together in the same set of courses. This type of course is a *non-dedicated section*, and the method described is most common in large universities where freshman take introductory courses with large enrollments. Another method is to use the *dedicated section*, in which the same group of students enrolls in the same courses together, but no other students are allowed to register for them.

Many institutions use a combination of dedicated and non-dedicated sections to design their LCs. Courses the students in the LC take are most often thematically based. Students may enroll in a cluster of core courses that faculty design in

order to focus on a particular topic. For instance, at the State University of West Georgia, students have had the opportunity to enroll in a LC that focused on Hispanic cultures and included courses in such disciplines as literature, Spanish, political science, and anthropology (Overfield, 2002).

The reasons for incorporating the LC model into an institution's curriculum vary greatly. Studies indicate that students who participate in LCs continue their post-secondary studies at a higher rate than do similar students in a traditional curriculum (Tinto, 2000). Indeed, the improvement of retention rates from the freshman to the sophomore year is a commonly cited reason for the development of LCs. Of 102 LC profiles listed in the National Learning Communities Directory, almost 70% were developed to improve retention. At least 35% of those listed were developed to increase the graduation rate. Such objectives are not overly optimistic. At the State University of West Georgia, for example, 1st-year students participating in five learning communities had a retention rate of 72.07% versus 64.02% for non-LC students (Gagnon, 1999).

Grade-point averages (GPAs) tend to be higher among LC students as well. Thompson (1998) found that students who participated in an LC that linked courses in anthropology, writing, and speech communication received higher grades in their speech course. Moreover, 84% of the students indicated that the linking of the courses had helped them to see interdisciplinary connections.

This last statistic suggests another reason for the development of thematically-based LCs: recruitment. Overfield (2002), for instance, describes a Hispanic cultures LC that focused on Hispanic culture and Spanish both inside and outside the United States. While all of the above reasons were cited as providing the impetus for the project, the LC was also used to make students aware of the importance of language study, regardless of one's intended career.

This combination of retention and GPAs may be both the cause and result of putting a group of 1st-year students together in a variety of extracurricular and cocurricular activities. Students in LCs often develop closer relationships with their instructors, a fact that allows them to explore academic issues in a number of formal and informal venues. For instance, a LC that focuses on the Hispanic presence in the United States may host a brown bag lunch and show a video like *My Family* (Luddy & Nava, 1995) that addresses themes covered in class. Similarly, guest speakers from both the campus and the wider community may visit to discuss issues that students read about or experience.

In many LCs there is a separate course in which students are given the opportunity to discuss certain topics from a variety of viewpoints as opposed to that of a single discipline. For instance, in the Hispanic cultures LC described by Overfield (2002) students took a course called "What Do You Know about Hispanic Cultures?," in which they looked specifically at the Hispanic presence in Georgia. In so doing, they drew from and built upon their other learning community classes in Spanish, Latino literature, and Latin American anthropology.

The project described in this paper stemmed from a LC that was designed for freshmen planning on pursuing careers in nursing. In order to enroll in the LC,

students who had indicated an interest in declaring a nursing major were given the opportunity to enroll in a cluster of courses, both dedicated and non-dedicated, that were chosen because they both fulfilled the core requirements of the university and were prerequisites for upper-level nursing classes. The only course in the students' schedule that was not a part of the rigid nursing curriculum was one entitled Spanish for Medical Careers, a beginning Spanish course designed specifically for health professionals with little Spanish ability. The course was included because the nursing faculty had found that the nursing profession, particularly in Georgia, increasingly demands bilingual skills. The development of this course resulted in part from a Teaching and Learning Grant from the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, and it became the focus of a community-based learning component that incorporated oral Spanish, nursing skills, and community needs.

Community-Based Learning

Community-based learning, or service learning, rests on a student-centered philosophy that uses the student's experiences as a basis for learning. Essentially, the student's experiences in the community form a lens through which the student sees theories and analyzes concepts (Cone & Harris, 1996; Kolb, 1984). The use of CBL is based on the theory that learning stems from interaction and that social context is fundamental to the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). In CBL, students reflect on their experience and then test their theories in further community activities. This cycle allows students to build on experience, test hypotheses, change strategies, and develop a variety of techniques to meet challenges that increase in difficulty as their intellectual sophistication toward the task at hand grows.

One element of Vygotskian theory posits that speech, as opposed to language as an abstract system, is interrelated with social and individual activity (Wertsch, 1990). Well-designed CBL activities put individuals in situations where they must examine their relationships to society.

In fact, the implementation of CBL in the foreign language (FL) classroom has become increasingly common. CBL projects include linking beginning Spanish students with Spanish-speaking ESL (English as a Second Language) students or members of a Spanish-speaking migrant community to perform a variety of tasks with one another, including tutoring, translating, and advocacy (Overfield, 1997; Wehling, 1999). Other CBL projects pair Spanish language students who have specific skills, such as video production, with Spanish-speaking communities that have specific needs or desires, such as the development of a community video (Darias et al., 1999). In all of the projects, language is the link between individuals and groups, and it is the medium through which concepts are viewed. It is also the object of reflection as language students consider how they use the language to communicate and question their experiences. In some cases, depending on a student's language ability, it may also be the means for reflection.

While CBL is a relatively new concept in the FL profession, it has long been used in other disciplines. It is, for instance, recognized as an essential part of nursing education. In 1998, the Pew Health Professions Commission recommended that CBL be integrated into nursing education. Prospective employers of nurses suggested that improvements in nursing education comprise more hands-on experiences and an early emphasis on community-based practice, as well as an emphasis on communication skills and cultural diversity (Hahn et al., 1998).

Callister and Hobbins-Garnett (2000) describe student reactions to CBL components as highly positive. After participating in such experiences, students in their study describe a “connectedness,” a sense of personal growth, a sense that they are better prepared for nursing in a diverse health care system, and the development of better critical thinking skills. Bartels (1998) says that in order for educators to make the necessary changes for improved education and thus produce “reflective, socially engaged practitioners, [learning] must be housed in the context of service experiences developed over the course of a student’s entire education” (p. 264). Boyer (1989), in an address to a group of nursing professionals, tied together these issues by saying that “language is our most essential human function,” because it emphasizes connections—interdisciplinary, cultural, and so forth—through language (p. 102).

The sense of interdisciplinary and social connection described by students in both LC and CBL research makes the linking of the two models a logical one. By so doing, instructors and students are able to exploit fully the underlying philosophies of both and offer a richer educational experience that places language and culture at the center of a freshman study plan. Moreover, they are able to do so in an atmosphere designed to offer both professional support for the faculty involved and academic and social support for the students.

The Project

Linking a Spanish course to the pre-nursing LC was largely the result of a simple realization: Nurses in the United States, and particularly in the Southeast, see an increasing number of clients whose first language is Spanish. Therefore, in any nursing program that emphasizes field work, preventive care, and multicultural sensitivity, students need more experience and linguistic knowledge to meet the basic needs of their clients. Upper-level nursing students at the University of West Georgia who have already participated in a number of field experiences were already aware of this demand.

The problem was that the rigid nursing curriculum made it difficult to schedule courses that were not requirements for the major. Pre-nursing students, however, had the flexibility to fit a language course into their schedule. The problem in their case, though, was a lack of awareness of the importance of Spanish in their chosen profession. Not yet realizing the importance of language study, they relegated language courses to the status of an unnecessary elective, thus making it an unlikely choice for 1st-year students. This combination of factors led the designers

of the project described here to insert the Spanish course into the freshman LC. By making it a required part of the LC, the course was guaranteed full enrollment, and it was highlighted as an important part of the pre-nursing course of study.

Spanish for Medical Careers was one of four classes in the fall semester of the Pre-Nursing LC. The course had no prerequisites and for that reason assumed that students were beginning Spanish learners, although many of them had, in fact, completed at least one year of high school Spanish. Still, none had a significant command of the spoken language, and none had the vocabulary that they would need in their profession. Of the 25 students in the Pre-Nursing LC, there were 24 females and 1 male. All had indicated that they wanted to major in nursing and for a variety of reasons, including the hope of a higher GPA and guaranteed slots in core courses, had chosen the LC for their first year of college study.

Activities in the course were not unlike activities in other language courses. Students participated in role plays with one another, did web-based “tours” of Hispanic countries, and read about Hispanic communities in Georgia and the Southeastern United States. The student’s role in the community as a future health care provider was emphasized. Native Spanish speakers from the community were invited to class to pose as patients and to be interviewed. These interviews allowed the students to practice their interpersonal and interpretive skills. The students followed each interview with a *debriefing* in English, during which the class discussed the cultural and linguistic content of the interview. For instance, in one case a young woman, known to the class only as “Gabi,” was brought in. Her assignment was to pretend that she was in the early stages of pregnancy, and the students’ job was to elicit information (see Appendix A). Over the course of the interview, one student asked Gabi, “¿Rezas?” (“Do you pray?”). During the debriefing, the class discussed the appropriateness of that question. This discussion led to a larger one that addressed how to maintain professionalism and a nonjudgmental attitude through language.

What made these sessions particularly meaningful for the students was the presence of a member of the nursing faculty. This professor sat in on the class primarily because she wanted to learn Spanish; however, as the semester progressed, her role became much more important, particularly during discussions of sensitivity and, of course, health issues.

For instance, in another interview an older woman, a full-time student, came in complaining of her inability to sleep. Over the course of the interview it was discovered that she was recently widowed. The students’ questions covered such topics as her diet. During the debriefing, the nursing professor praised the students for considering dietary issues in exploring the reasons for the patient’s insomnia, and, after a few gentle questions, led the students to consider other possible reasons for the sleeplessness, including the combined stresses experienced by a recent widow who was also a student. The students then prepared questions in Spanish that could be used in a future interview with a patient who complained of similar problems.

Moving Beyond the Classroom

The series of interviews described above, which took place in the classroom, formed the basis for the final community-based project of the semester: a visit to a local chicken-processing plant, where 95% of the employees were Spanish speakers from Mexico and Guatemala. The plant was chosen as the site for the project for a number of reasons. The nursing faculty frequently visited the plant as part of its Community Nursing course, so there was already a strong relationship between the university and the plant's management. Furthermore, the plant employed several native speakers of Spanish as outreach coordinators, and their presence, combined with the extensive knowledge of the nursing faculty, provided students with the means not only to use basic health care language with the employees but also to gain insight into the work situation of Hispanic immigrants.

In designing this portion of the course, professors decided that, given the fact that the students were still beginning language learners, they would need to perform a very specific task that would require them to use formulaic language authentically and would not trap them into a situation in which the native speakers would have to use sophisticated language. In addition, the course designers knew they needed a situation that would not require sophisticated nursing skills. It was decided that blood pressure (BP) screenings would be a good language and health care context for the type of experience that was necessary.

Students prepared for the plant visit by first learning the basics of taking a patient's blood pressure. While this is a skill that requires practice, its mechanics can be learned fairly easily. In terms of language, it requires the ability to count, the ability to ask for basic information (name, age, diet), and knowledge of basic command forms ("give me your arm; don't be nervous"). The Spanish course provided the opportunity for language practice through the use of constructed dialogues (see Appendix B), while the nursing professor who attended the class trained the students in basic blood-pressure-screening techniques.

For the actual plant visit, students worked in pairs to take the BP readings. With this structure, one student could concentrate on the BP technique, while a partner was responsible for asking the necessary questions of the patients. Students switched roles periodically during the screenings, so that both could practice each part of the process. Both the Spanish and nursing professors were present during the screenings, as were a number of senior nursing students and the plant's community outreach coordinators. This combination of novices and experts gave the freshmen ample linguistic and nursing support.

For instance, if a patient appeared to have exceptionally high blood pressure, an experienced nurse was available to double-check the reading, and a fluent Spanish speaker could talk with the patient to make recommendations or ask further questions. One senior nursing student, who was also completing a minor in Spanish, was able to do both and never lost an opportunity to tell the new students how many times she had had to use Spanish in the CBL components of her nursing classes.

The freshmen thus saw models of appropriate professional and linguistic behavior in an authentic situation and were later able to reflect on that and their own experiences. The nursing professor who was present both during class time and on-site at the chicken plant noted that “the students ... seemed to really like buddying-up with the senior nursing students (and the seniors stated they liked the experience).” After the BP-screening sessions, in fact, the freshmen stayed behind to talk with the seniors about the experience and the nursing program in general.

As Gallimore and Tharp (1990) point out, “Productive interactions occur in goal-directed activity settings, which are jointly undertaken by apprentices and experts. They involve contributions and discoveries by learners, as well as the assistance of an ‘expert’ collaborator” (p. 200). By taking careful consideration of both the linguistic and content demands of the interaction described here, we were able to provide students with “expert collaborators” in a focused activity.

Faculty Support

The importance of faculty support cannot be stressed too strongly in this project. In a learning community context, faculty work together to link LC themes across disciplines. They then explore these themes in a variety of cocurricular and extra-curricular activities. In so doing, faculty members who might not normally have opportunities to interact outside the university work together to develop interdisciplinary teaching techniques that serve multiple purposes.

In this case, nursing and language faculty, who do not normally collaborate on courses, not only taught together but learned from one another as well. The nursing professor learned rudimentary Spanish that will help her in her Community Nursing class, and the language professor learned a few of the basic tenets of the philosophy that underlies the nursing education program at the university. As a result of this experience she will be better able to develop the Spanish for Medical Careers course so that it incorporates a clearer understanding of the nursing profession.

Conclusion

While both the students and the nursing faculty praised the CBL dimension of the course, faculty reflection on the project revealed a number of ways in which it could be improved. For instance, the nursing professor who remained involved with the class suggested that the course integrate a clinical component. Such a component could, for instance, help deal with some of the transportation problems that a few of the students faced in getting to the site.

Another suggestion made was to develop other specific activities in addition to BP screenings that would meet the language and content criteria already developed for CBL projects. An example of such a project is vision screening, in which the patient is expected to read an eye chart from a certain distance. Like BP screenings, this activity requires basic Spanish, yet it allows room for slight variation if

an adventurous student wishes to make small talk. At the same time it controls to a degree the nature of the Spanish-speaker's language so that it is within the realm of the student's knowledge. The nursing professor noted that the specificity of the BP task worked well with language learning and suggested that a vision screening test would fulfill the same requirements.

While we do not know the long-term effects of this project on either the students' desire to continue foreign language study or their future effectiveness as health care providers, the short-term effects were noticeable. The nursing professor noted that the project's participants "seemed to feel less inhibited in class" after several Spanish speakers at the plant complimented them on their pronunciation. Several students indicated a new appreciation for the importance of language in their future careers.

While it may seem obvious that communication is a necessary part of nursing, many of the students were not previously aware that communication involved more than words, nor did they realize that communication is a learned skill that involves an understanding of sociocultural contexts as well as grammar. Because this experience was situated in a curricular space supported by various disciplines as well as "experts," students were able to engage in sociolinguistic and nursing learning opportunities. Future research that examines the linking of the learning community with CBL might investigate the nature of the novice/expert dialogue that occurs during actual CBL experiences, or it could, perhaps, chart the learning processes that students employ when engaged in a CBL activity.

Creating a curricular space in which language study is recognized as both an academic means and end creates interactive opportunities for both novice learners and their expert teachers to explore, reflect, and construct meaning. Students have the opportunity to reflect on how and what they learn and the ways in which they may apply that learning. As one student noted, "The most satisfying part of the experience for me was applying the skills that I have learned and knowing that all my struggling was not in vain." The spiraling nature of this type of learning lends itself well to the concept of the learning community and reflects the concepts of interaction presented by Vygotsky.

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Appendix A

Gabi

A patient is coming to your office on Wednesday. Find out the following:

1. The patient's complete name
2. If she speaks English
3. Her address
4. Her phone number
5. Her social security number
6. Her insurance information (name of insurance company, if she has an insurance card, etc.)
7. Her age
8. Her work information (where, what, etc.)
9. Family information (Does she live with her family?)
10. Why she is at the clinic
11. Her diet

At the beginning of the interview, determine how you will begin. Will you simply jump in with your questions, or are you going to do something before beginning? You must also be able to end the interview gracefully. (No awkward silence!) Your "patient" knows that you are doing this for a class and will not be getting a diagnosis or recommendations in class; so the logical "ending" to the visit won't occur. Therefore, you have to be able to end the interview, thus signaling her that it is over.

Appendix B

With your partner, prepare a dialogue according to the following guidelines. You will need a blood pressure (BP) cuff and stethoscope to perform the interaction.

Estudiante A

Greet your patient and ask him/her for his/her name.

Ask patient how old s/he is.

Show the patient the BP cuff and stethoscope, say what they are, and say that they don't hurt.

Say that you aren't a doctor but rather a nurse. Take reading and give BP reading to patient.

Reply appropriately.

End the conversation.

Estudiante B

Respond to the nurse.

Say that you are 45.

Say that you are nervous because you don't like doctors.

Ask if it's a good reading.

3

Stepping Out of the Classroom to Increase Spanish Language Skills and Cultural Awareness

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Abstract

This article describes the experience of our college-level Spanish students who stepped out of their campus classrooms and into elementary school libraries, corridors, and classrooms to develop an exchange program. Chase Street Elementary School, like many other elementary schools in Athens, Georgia, has a large Hispanic student population composed mostly of recent immigrants with limited English proficiency.

This experience served not only the Hispanic community of Athens, but our college students as well. Our students contribute to the reduction of the language barrier that separates teachers from students and their families, and, at the same time, they have the unique opportunity to practice their language skills outside the classroom setting when they are directly exposed to native speakers of the target language. An experience of this type serves as a model to help teachers bring cultural connections into the curriculum.

Background

Given the dramatic increase in the Hispanic or Latino population in the United States and the special linguistic needs these people bring to our local community, we developed at the University of Georgia-Athens (UGA) a community service project aimed at bettering our students' skills in the target language, as well as at assisting this growing segment of our society. Thus, we have created a program that focuses on increasing interaction between the Spanish- and English-speaking sectors of Athens.

As noted in a report of Census 2000, "The Hispanic or Latino population increased by 57.9 percent, from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, compared with an increase of 13.2 percent for the total U.S population" during that same 10-year period (Guzmán, 2001, p. 2). Moreover, Census 2000 revealed that states such as Georgia and North Carolina, which have not been traditionally considered Hispanic strongholds, saw notable increases in that segment of the population. Like most of the state of Georgia, Athens-Clarke County must now learn to adapt to the increasing numbers of Hispanics or Latinos living here.

For the first time in the history of the United States, the southeastern section of the country has become a major destination for immigrants, due to the economic draw of construction, service, and food-processing industries that rely on cheap labor. In 2000 in Georgia, the Hispanic or Latino population was 300% larger than in 1990, with these groups now comprising a little more than 5% of the state's total population, compared to a national average of 12.5%. The percentage of Hispanics in Athens-Clarke County is somewhat higher than in other areas of the state. From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic or Latino population here increased 332%, making it 6% of the entire population of the county (Brewer & Suchan, 2001, pp. 1, 9).

These numbers have had a direct impact on the racial and ethnic composition of the K-12 student body in the school district. With 30% of the Hispanic or Latino population under 18 years old in 2000 (as compared to 25.7% for those under 18 years of age for the total U.S population), the enrollment of Hispanics or Latinos at the K-12 levels has similarly increased. In Athens-Clarke County, there was a 400% rise in the enrollment of Hispanic or Latino students from 1994 to 2002. In 1994 only 303 of the 11,094 students were Hispanic or Latino; by 2000 the number had climbed to 1,253 Hispanic or Latino students in a total student population of 11,333 (Georgia Department of Education).

According to the report of the National Center for Education Statistics, "Language Spoken at Home by Hispanic Students" (2000), at the national level in 1999, 14% of all students enrolled in grades K-12 were Hispanic or Latino. Many Hispanics or Latinos speak Spanish, and many Spanish speakers report being of limited English proficiency. As also reported at the national level, in 1999, 57% of Hispanic students in grades K-12 spoke mostly English at home; 25% spoke mostly Spanish; and 17% spoke English and Spanish with equal frequency. Hispanic students who were enrolled in grades K-5 were more likely than those enrolled in higher grades (6-8 or 9-12) to speak mostly Spanish at home (28% versus 21% and 22%, respectively).

While over half of Hispanic students spoke primarily English at home, language usage varied according to the birthplaces of the mothers. Hispanic or Latino students whose mothers were born outside the United States were more likely than their peers with U.S.-born mothers to speak mostly Spanish at home. However, even Hispanic or Latino students whose mothers were foreign-born were less likely to use Spanish more frequently at home if they were in the higher grades (National Center for Education Statistics). Although we are unable to offer statistics as to the

languages spoken at home by Athens-Clarke County K-5 Hispanic or Latino students, we know that in 1999-2000 there were 935 Clarke County K-12 students registered under the category of "Language Minority" and attending ESOL or LEP classes (Georgia Learning Connections), and it is clear that a large majority of them are Spanish speakers, mostly recent immigrants struggling to learn English.

It is also evident that having such a high percentage of students with poor English language skills creates cultural and linguistic barriers that the Athens-Clarke County School district is just beginning to try to overcome. To contribute to this effort, a group of faculty members of the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia (including an assistant professor, the language program coordinator, two teaching assistants, and three instructors) and their Spanish classes, together with the bilingual parent-teacher liaison at one of the public schools with the highest enrollment of Hispanic students, have created an exchange program that focuses on increasing interaction between the Spanish- and English-speaking segments of Athens. The purpose of this program is twofold: to offer a creative way for university students enrolled in Spanish courses to use their L2 language skills and, at the same time, to contribute to breaking down the linguistic and cultural barriers at those elementary schools where the increasing enrollment of Latino or Hispanic students with poor English skills outpaces the hiring of bilingual staff.

This experience benefits both the college students and the elementary school students in Athens. On one hand, university students learning Spanish practice their language skills within an ideal context, that is, with native speakers who attend the public elementary schools in Athens-Clarke County and their parents. Thus they gain firsthand exposure not only to Spanish, but also to Hispanic or Latino culture, in a way similar to that of a study-abroad experience, which is impossible to recreate in the closed class setting. On the other hand, they bridge the communication between English and Spanish speakers within the community by (1) interpreting during semiannual parent-teacher conferences held at Athens-Clarke County's elementary schools, (2) providing one-on-one tutoring for Hispanic or Latino K-5 students who speak mostly Spanish, and (3) preparing bilingual readings intended for both English and Spanish speakers.

Participants in this program were recruited from Spanish classes at the fifth semester or above (including composition and conversation, introductory linguistics, and literature classes). While some of these students participated as volunteers, others received partial class credit for their involvement. The percentage of the overall class grade and the number of hours required varied according to each instructor's criteria.

Our pilot experience began with the parent-teacher conferences in fall of 2001 at the Chase Street Elementary School, which at that time had a population of 333 K-5 students, 30% of whom were Hispanics or Latinos (Georgia Department of Education, 2002). According to the ESOL teacher, the large majority of Hispanic or Latino students (about 95%) are enrolled in her class.

The enthusiastic response that this first outreach program generated at UGA, in the elementary schools, and in the community as well triggered the development of the other components of the program—tutoring and bilingual readings—and provided the impetus for the implementation of the Spanish practicum. The community's enthusiasm is documented in the profuse coverage by local media of the interaction between UGA and K-5 students.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Three of our fifth-semester Spanish classes served as interpreters during the parent-teacher conferences at Chase Street Elementary School for the first time in Fall 2001. This activity was assigned either as extra credit or as 5% of the course grade. In order to get ready to participate, the college students received training during class time. First, the bilingual parent liaison and the ESOL teacher, the two people with the most experience in organizing and interpreting during the conferences, visited one of our classes. During that session, they described in detail an average parent-teacher conference, anticipated questions and answers that either parents or teachers might have, and emphasized potential cultural differences and possible misunderstandings. This visit was videotaped and was subsequently shown in the other two participating classes.

We audio-taped two mock conferences and used them as teaching aid materials for practice in class. In the first role-play, teacher and parent discussed the progress of an "A" student. For the second one, we chose a more tense conversation about a less successful student with behavior problems. We provided our students with the report cards used at the conferences. As homework, our students had to look for related vocabulary. In class we asked them to get into groups of three for a role-playing activity. One student took the role of the teacher, another of the interpreter, and the third of the parent. These activities turned out to be exciting, even for those students who were not participating in the conferences, a fact attested to by the end-of-semester class evaluations. In the near future we will have an interactive vocabulary exercise in our Web site, now under construction.

For this first experience, participating students were required to attend the conferences for at least 2 hours during the times that were most convenient for them. Given that each conference lasted about 20 minutes, most of the students interpreted in approximately four of them. Some less confident students preferred to work in pairs. The school's bilingual parent-teacher liaison, together with one Spanish instructor, supervised during the conferences and stepped in whenever assistance was needed. The following semester, Spring 2002, we required our students to participate for more hours (two to four). More classes participated (giving us a total of 40 students), and we included four Athens-Clarke County elementary schools. The parents enthusiastically expressed their gratefulness to our college students, and their testimonials are printed in both the university and city newspaper coverage of these events, including "Las escuelas de Athens enfrentan el reto del lenguaje para ayudar a entendernos unos a los otros" [Athens

schools face the language challenge to help with mutual understanding] (2002), “Good Neighbors” (Long, 2002), “Schools Speak to Language Issue” (2002), “Se habla español” [Spanish spoken here] (2001), “Students Volunteer as Interpreters” (2001), “University Reaches Out, Brings World to Teens” (2001), and “Welcome to the Bilingual World” (2001).

Tutoring

From our conversations with teachers and the parent-teacher liaison and from our visits to the elementary schools, we learned that K-5 students with poor English skills have only 45 minutes of ESOL instruction per day. For the rest of the day these students are integrated into their age-appropriate classes taught exclusively in English, regardless of a student’s knowledge of English. Since most of the parents of these children are also struggling with their own English skills and since most work long hours, they receive little or no extra help. In the spring of 2002, in some of the exchange-program, Spanish-participating classes, we gave our college students the option of participating in a newly designed tutoring program. Because we understood that continuity was crucial in tutoring, we requested that our college students commit to help K-5 Hispanic or Latino students with their classwork for at least five sessions. Some students decided to participate beyond their class requirements and continued tutoring for more sessions. One of our most enthusiastic tutors explained to *The Georgia Review* that “it wasn’t like a teacher-student interaction as much as a sort of big sister-little sister interaction.” (Long, 17). More interestingly to us, as language teachers trying to assess the success of this experience in terms of language acquisition, was the fact that this same Spanish student stated, “When you’re speaking with a child in another language you’re less inhibited. You’re not as worried about making mistakes.” This perception confirms our initial belief that this volunteerism is a learning experience for students at both the college and K-5 levels.

Bilingual Reading

Historically, in the U.S.A., the teaching of reading has not received enough attention in the L2 classroom. It is usually assumed that well-developed first-language reading skills are automatically transferred to L2 reading situations (Lally, 1998; Gascoigne, 2002). An important goal in the teaching of reading is to develop in our students the desire to read. In other words, teachers should make students enjoy the reading activities so “they will become life long readers” (Moser & Morrison, 1998, p. 234).

The importance of reading cannot be overemphasized. Literacy skills in our first language are of paramount importance for overall intellectual development. Thus, as indicated by the media, there seems to be a national effort to help all children, as well as a considerable number of adults, to develop their reading skills.

Researchers have further demonstrated that reading from an early age helps individuals to have a better knowledge of the world and gives them an advantage over those who cannot or do not read. Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes (1991) reexamined the treatment of L2 reading and made powerful recommendations for its future. One suggestion that teacher select reading texts for which students possess the appropriate background knowledge. They also propose that steps be made to activate the students' relevant prior knowledge through well-known techniques, such as the use of visuals and advance organizers or more actively through discussion and problem-solving. In short, background knowledge must be identified and linked to the focus of the text. In addition to activities that encourage the activation of background knowledge, other recommendations made by Swaffar et al. (p. 137) include using texts that contain topics that are familiar and interesting to the student and that contain a minimal amount of description. Unless the scene is concretely visual or supported by illustrations, extended descriptions could lose the reader's interest.

With these few ideas in mind, we encouraged our Spanish students at the University of Georgia to put their reading skills into practice by reading stories in both Spanish and English to small children. In doing so, we started the bilingual reading program at Chase Street Elementary School.

The school library schedules reading groups for 30 to 60 minutes once a week, and we used that schedule to implement our bilingual reading program. Our students were asked to select a children's book and create a lesson plan before going to the local school to read stories in English and Spanish to the students. The lesson plan, which was revised and approved by the Spanish instructor, included pre-reading activities, the actual reading, and post-reading activities, thus reinforcing vocabulary and language structures. All of the reading classes were videotaped.

Spanish Practicum

Moreover, the University of Georgia approved the Practicum in Service Learning course, the main goal of which is the practical use of the Spanish language through community involvement. Students will work directly with the Spanish-speaking population in and around Athens, Georgia. There are planned and systematic activities coordinated between the Department of Romance Languages and a variety of community organizations, and students earn one hour of credit for volunteering in the local community. The academic gain in the practicum is that the students improve their language skills by means of direct exposure to native speakers of the target language. Additionally, they are also participating in service to the community, which is an extra benefit. While the practicum is monitored by an instructor, there are no traditional classroom activities or course assignments, such as exams, quizzes, or final papers. The program provides an immersion-like experience, similar to that of a study-abroad program, but without requiring the students to leave Athens.

Another objective of the practicum is to increase Spanish language proficiency in general and to expand the students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Organized to allow for maximum student interaction with members of the local Hispanic community, the practicum includes not only schools but a variety of social organizations as well. The increase of the Hispanic population in Athens in the last 5 years makes it possible for our students to interact with thousands of Spanish speakers outside of the university and to practice their language skills. Not only do they have the opportunity to use their language skills, but they also gain firsthand exposure to various Hispanic or Latino cultures and will, we hope, learn to appreciate them. One of the intended outcomes of this course is to help others, but we also want our students to have an educational experience by learning from the population with which they come into contact.

Each participating organization is required to file a "Memorandum of Understanding" with the Controller's Office of the university, and, as noted previously, all student activities are monitored and coordinated by one professor, in cooperation with representatives from the community organizations that participate in the practicum. Since this is an entirely new program in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia, the practicum is undergoing regular modifications and changes for improvement. However, based on our successful experience with service learning in the past, the future certainly looks promising.

Conclusions

As we share this experience with our colleagues, we hope that it will motivate other Spanish programs to start a language and cultural integration between the university and its local community. We also hope that the success of the different components of our service learning experience will highlight the beneficial impact of having more bilingual professionals—such as classroom teachers, special education teachers, therapists, and social workers—in a school district with large numbers of Spanish speakers.

By bringing to school the language that most K-5 Hispanic or Latino students in Athens speak or hear at home, we hope to increase the self esteem of these young people and put them in a leadership position, as they will be able to correct and teach our college students! Such activities in Spanish will also attract the young Spanish learners at the public schools. In recent years, as the result of initiatives by parents, most of the elementary schools in Athens have tried to incorporate Spanish into their curricula in different ways. In one of them, Barrow Elementary School, Spanish as a second language has been offered as part of the regular school schedule, thanks to the Parent Teacher Association, which provides funding for the Spanish program, including the teacher's salary and materials.

Our program encourages interaction among English- and Spanish-speaking residents of Athens that would be unlikely to occur without the mediation that our program provides. We have proven that students from both sides, the public schools and the university, benefit in many ways from interaction with one another. We

truly believe that the connection between academic content and the Hispanic or Latino community will not only give the students the opportunity to practice their language skills but will encourage the Athens community to further break down racial, cultural, and ethnic stereotypes.

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4

Merging Foreign Language Theory and Practice in Designing Technology-Based Tasks

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Abstract

While educators are aware of the benefits of technology in language instruction, one challenge they face is how to implement effective interactive technology-based tasks. Technology offers numerous advantages, yet it is not without some drawbacks. Terry (1998) notes that the purpose of using technology should be clear and pedagogical; it should not be used “to fill (or kill) time” (p. 282). The goal of this article is to integrate the theory of technology instruction with the creation of well-designed tasks. To that end, we examine recent research in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) as well as online learning. We offer ideas for the creation and incorporation of Web-based activities and computer-mediated communication projects using e-mail and chat rooms. Finally, we present a guide for designing and evaluating technology-based activities for a variety of languages and learner levels.

Background

Language instructors are well aware of the potential benefits of technology in the classroom. In fact, the last decade has witnessed a virtual explosion of technological tools and convincing reasons to implement them. Research into the role, the uses, the acceptance, and the feasibility of technology in foreign language classrooms has flourished, and there is no lack of articles to be found on related

topics. The challenge language educators face, then, is no longer deciding whether to incorporate technology into their classes, but rather it is defining what technologies they should use and how they can best incorporate them. To that end, the goal of this paper is to integrate the theory of technology instruction with current trends in the creation of pedagogically sound tasks. With that goal in mind, we turn first to a review of recent research in technology and computer-assisted language instruction (CALL).

New Technologies in Language Learning

New technologies have been hailed as tools that can help language learners improve their skills in a number of ways (for reviews of previous literature, see, for example, Cubillos, 1998; Salaberry, 2001; or Liu, Moore, Graham, & Lee, 2002). Studies have found that multimedia technologies can facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary through simultaneous delivery of oral and visual input (Chun & Plass, 1996; Danan, 1992) or through interactive reading software (Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001; Lomicka, 1998; Lyman-Hager et al., 1993). Research suggests, though, that vocabulary acquisition is not the only skill that can improve through the use of technologies. Improvements have been evidenced in the areas of writing and literacy (Kern, 2000) as well, and technology can also increase students' language awareness (Secules, Herron, & Tomasello, 1992; Jamieson, 1994; Nagata, 1993; Johnston & Milne, 1995). Another area of language that has benefited from the addition of technology-based activities is culture, as foreign language cultures may be explored readily and in more depth than in a non-technology-enhanced classroom (Abrams, 2002; Abrate, 1996; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1998; Lyman-Hager, 1995). Finally, but not least importantly, research has shown that the incorporation of technology into language classrooms can enhance students' motivation to learn (Kern, 1995a, 1995b; Lee, 2001a; Master-Wicks, Postlewate, & Lewental, 1996; Meunier, 1998).

Given these general gains witnessed as a result of technology, as language educators strive to incorporate new and different types of technologies, they must decide what tools are most effective and most easily implemented. For that reason, we have chosen to limit the scope of this paper to two primary types of tasks: World Wide Web (WWW)-related and computer-mediated communication (CMC).

World Wide Web (WWW)

McGee (2001) presents pedagogical arguments for the integration of student Web pages into language courses. She claims that such projects not only increase motivation and student involvement (as discussed in Andrews, 2000; Browne & Kinnealy, 1997; Kern, 1995b; Kubota, 1999; Walz, 1998, among others) but also contribute to the 5 C's of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999, National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project). Belz (2001) also encourages the creation of Web pages as a collaborative project

between classes. She finds that the students involved in her transatlantic collaborative projects benefited from the interaction with other language learners both linguistically and developmentally. Oberlé and Purvis (1999) favor the addition of Web-related material to otherwise “traditional” language courses in order to enhance the students’ learning experience. The WWW provides the students with current and relevant information in an easily delivered and easily accessed format. The authors note that the students in these studies experienced improved interest and motivation as well as performance and that students of differing learner styles and abilities profited from the interactive approach. Further, Soler Monreal et al. (1999) note that the WWW is increasingly being used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to promote communication with students from other countries and as a source of information, and that learners and teachers alike gain from the experience.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

CMC has also seen a surge of interest lately, and studies regarding both synchronous and asynchronous communications abound. Peyton (1999) discusses the importance of interaction and negotiation in language learning (Vygotsky, 1934; Pica, 1996) and points out that network interaction, specifically chat room discussion, is a means to achieve such communication among students. Computer networks allow increased opportunities for students to interact with one another, while they also allow more students to participate than would otherwise (Beauvois, 1992; Kelm, 1992; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1995). L. Lee (2001a, 2001b) notes that chat interactions take place in real time, thereby allowing students to practice the same tactics to negotiate meaning and modify their utterances as those they would use in normal face-to-face interactions. Pelletieri (2000) also reports increased negotiation of meaning in her study of nonnative speaker chats in a university Spanish course. Further, Pelletieri found that students monitored their partner’s output as well as self-monitoring their own utterances. Because these chat room communications are written, albeit in real time, they allow learners to process the input and to monitor their output more easily than in oral communication, thus paying more attention to their language use. This attention can lead to increased language production as well as increased complexity (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995b).

Asynchronous communication has received no less attention in language acquisition research. Tella (1991, 1992a, 1992b) studied an e-mail exchange between high school classes in Finland and England and found that the students involved in these asynchronous exchanges developed more authentic communication than they would have if they had been limited to conversing with their peers. Warschauer (1996) looked at e-mail between the instructor and the students in an ESL writing class and found that e-mail was a powerful medium for learning. The e-mail communications between the teacher and students fostered greater learning and encouraged question asking, both of which aided the students’ ultimate language abilities. Jogan, Heredia, and Aguilera (2001) point out the value of e-mail ex-

changes in fostering meaningful interaction with native speakers of the target culture, in addition to providing firsthand cultural knowledge. Dernoshek and Lomicka (2002) discuss an e-mail cyber-project between students in the United States and partner classes in France and Spain. Their semester-long study, which furthered the “Connections” goal of the *Standards*, tracked students’ participation in cyber-projects. As a result of their involvement in the projects, students reinforced and furthered their knowledge of content areas through a series of asynchronous exchanges with students in the partner classes in France and Spain. Müller-Hartmann (2000) reports on a task-based intercultural e-mail project between students in Germany and students in the United States and Canada. His project investigates task design, students’ and teachers’ roles, and the structure of interpersonal exchanges in intercultural e-mail projects. Finally, Bernhardt & Kamil (1998) report on a German class that incorporated bulletin board postings relating to class readings. The authors note that the addition of the online bulletin board allowed the students to approach sophisticated topics and to participate in intellectual interactions, as well as to benefit from increased interest and motivation. Other recent publications (Warschauer, 1995; Warschauer et al., 2000; Dudeney, 2000) provide examples of well-constructed e-mail projects for virtual settings.

It is clear from this admittedly brief overview of these studies that there is no lack of positive evidence regarding the incorporation of WWW and CMC tasks into our language classes. Very few educators would deny the advantages of such tasks, although many may not know how to approach the next step: integrating them. In the following sections we discuss ways to design and implement a variety of meaningful and effective technology-based activities into language classrooms, so that teachers may make the most beneficial connection between theory and practice.

Tasks and Communication

In spite of the benefits of technology in the classroom and in spite of the fact that technology is increasingly available to educators, it is important not to lose sight of the tasks prepared for technology-enhanced classroom settings. A “task” as defined by Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) is “an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language” (p. 289). Tasks provide a purpose to learners, encourage interaction, and promote target language use as a means to an end. Although various definitions exist as to what constitutes a *task* (Long, 1985; Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985; Crookes & Gass, 1993; Breen, 1987; Candlin, 1987; J. F. Lee & VanPatten, 1995; Chapelle, 1999; J. F. Lee, 2000), there is general agreement as to the characteristics of tasks:

- (a) They are purposeful and goal-oriented, leading to an attainable objective.
- (b) They require comprehension, manipulation, and production of the target language.

- (c) They focus on a meaningful exchange of information.
- (d) They can be brief, simple, complex, or lengthy.
- (e) They engage learners in activity required to carry out operations.

Furthermore, the nature of task-based activities can be problem-solving or consensus-building, and they can promote interdependent group functioning to provide learners with varying degrees of linguistic support (J. F. Lee, 2000, p. 33).

Semones & Chism (2001) warn that bells and whistles should not constitute the driving force behind the use of technology; rather teachers should think critically about how they facilitate interaction and communication in virtual environments. In fact, because communication and interaction are essential parts of task design in the classroom, several questions are worthy of exploration. What role does task design play in virtual environments? How and between whom may communication and interaction take place in technology-enhanced environments? How is the target language used in these nontraditional spaces? In any environment it is important to consider that, as J. F. Lee (2000) points out, communication extends beyond a question-and-answer exchange between a student and teacher. He states that the notion of communication encompasses “expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning” (p. 1). Communication, regardless of whether it occurs face-to-face or in virtual environments, requires an exchange to take place, and in technology-enhanced language environments, such an exchange can be accomplished through a variety of tasks.

Designing Pedagogically-Sound Tasks

There are a number of factors to consider in designing pedagogically sound tasks, both for technology-based and traditional environments. Littlejohn and Hicks (1987, as cited in J. F. Lee, 2000) discuss the basic features that should be considered in task design: extended discourse (going beyond the sentence level), information gap (exchange of information that is not known to all participants), uncertainty (opportunities for learners to choose what to say and how to say it), goal orientation (tasks should be purposeful), and real-time processing (tasks should have spontaneity).

In order to design such pedagogically sound tasks, there are a few key points to keep in mind. First and foremost, it is important to identify the task goals, which should be made clear to learners. Terry (1998) notes,

When we choose authentic materials, there should be a purpose—not simply to decorate the page or to fill (or kill) time but to introduce learners to a specific cultural concept, to illustrate something that has just been taught (or that is going to be taught), to serve as a stimulus for an activity. (p. 282)

Second, learners must be prepared for the task. To prepare their students, teachers can link the activity to previously studied linguistic and cultural concepts as well as activate appropriate background knowledge at the beginning of activities. The activity should also engage learners in negotiation and communication on the basis of the information gathered (peer survey, partner interview). The goal of the task should move them beyond mere exposure to information. Students can draw generalizations, examine what trends exist in the class, and compare their responses to those of their partners. This structure provides an ultimate purpose, while using the target language as the means of achieving a higher goal. With these steps in mind, the final section of this paper offers concrete suggestions for the successful design and implementation of technology-based activities, examples of which are given below.

Selecting Technology

In this section we discuss ideas for implementing different types of pedagogically-sound tasks for virtual environments—WWW-based tasks and CMC activities, both asynchronous and synchronous. Sample tasks are provided at the following Web site: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/glord/SCOLT/activity_index.html>.

Web-Based Tasks

Web-based tasks require students to consult one or more Web sites or use the Web to search for information related to a particular topic. While there are many ways to approach Web-based tasks, some teachers may find that Dodge's (1997) six-step model serves as a practical guide for activity design. His model, which furthers skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, encourages teachers to create a structured "quest" when designing Web-based tasks. Dodge (1997) refers to this type of activity as a *Webquest* or "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet" (p. 1). Webquests provide background information to the learners, specify a particular task, give information sources, propose steps that students will take to complete the task, and offer guidance in organizing the information. Dodge specifies that short-term Webquests can be completed in one to three class periods, whereas long-term Webquests may take a week, a month, or longer. For examples of Webquests for students of German, Spanish, ESL, and for other web-based tasks in Spanish and French, readers are invited to visit the corresponding Web site: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/glord/SCOLT/activity_index.html>.

In addition to Webquests and Web-based tasks, other activities, such as scavenger hunts, are a popular and fun tool for the technology-enhanced language classroom. They can assist students in accessing information on the Web in creative contexts, and provide ways for students to practice problem solving, develop search strategies, and engage in reading comprehension. The Web site <<http://websearch.about.com/cs/huntsandgames/>> offers many links for those interested

in exploring and creating scavenger hunts and Websearch games. We have provided an example of a scavenger hunt for students studying German at our Web site: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/glord/SCOLT/activity_index.html>.

Computer-Mediated Interaction Tasks

As pointed out by Semones & Chism (2001), synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated interactions are becoming more important to language classes. Recent research, as noted in the first section of this paper, underscores the benefits that these types of discussions can bring to learners, both in and out of the classroom.

Students can use e-mail or bulletin boards to interact with one another or with students from the target language and culture. Although asynchronous interaction does not provide immediate feedback or responses for the students, it can serve as a useful tool for other types of tasks, particularly those focusing on cultural awareness. We offer some general examples of possible activities for foreign language classes at our Web site: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/glord/SCOLT/activity_index.html>.

Synchronous CMC can be engaging and motivating for students in language classes. During real-time discussions, students can be actively engaged in target language conversation. Here, we briefly discuss three different types of tasks for the chat room: open discussions, debates, and information-gap activities. Open-discussion chat tasks may be more appropriate when students are working with controversial subjects. While discussion of such topics may cause heated debates within the class, they may be better managed in chat rooms, since students are more easily under control (i.e., a student “shouting” [using all capital letters] in a chat room does not produce the same effects as a student shouting in class). Open discussions can be used at any time in a unit, provided that the students are equipped with adequate vocabulary items. Students can generate vocabulary words during a brainstorming activity in a chat room, and the transcripts can be printed out and used in a follow-up discussion. Please see our Web site for an example of open-ended discussions for the chat room.

The use of debates in the chat room may be based on class discussions, on readings from a textbook, or from outside sources. Students can be encouraged to link these discussions and readings to their own lives and experiences and to synthesize and compare cultural information. Debates can be open-ended or require that students argue an assigned position. Debates are often more appropriate for the end of a unit, when the students are familiar with the structures, the vocabulary, and the ideas presented and can link different perspectives to an issue. Depending on the topic or the class, students may tend to argue in the same way, often wanting to defend the American way of life. Unfortunately, a discussion of this sort would not encourage students to reflect on the target country’s cultural context. By assigning positions, students are more likely to reflect on each culture

and its respective context. Please refer to our Web site for an example of chat tasks with assigned positions.

Information-gap activities offer another opportunity for students to engage in negotiation of meaning and manage interaction in the chat room. For these activities, one student is provided with information that another does not have but needs to obtain. Shrum and Glisan (2000) point out that students may need time to become comfortable doing these types of tasks and that they should practice the technique before engaging in a full-length activity. Please refer to our Web site for examples of information-gap tasks for the chat room.

A Guide for Implementing Technology

As previous sections have illustrated, the benefits of technology are generally accepted. Yet, the realistic, effective, and theory-based implementation of technology in the foreign language classroom has been less than consistent and requires a well-thought-out model. An individual instructor has a remarkable number of options for the incorporation of technology in the FL classroom and sometimes may not know how or where to begin. Using the theoretical information discussed in the previous sections as a point of departure, we have developed five steps, our “ABC’s,” by which instructors can merge theories of language and technology with the practical aspects of their implementation. These guidelines were developed as a result of the authors’ combined experiences as language coordinators, instructors, and researchers.

The ABC’s of Technology Integration

“A” is for “Analysis.”

Before deciding which technology to implement, teachers must first determine their needs. As Terry (1998) notes, lesson planning should be based on illustrating a specific concept and not simply using the bells and whistles available. Thus, the first step in incorporating technology is to determine the goal, then to decide which technological medium best allows for the realization of that goal. For example, new vocabulary and lexical items can easily be incorporated into a chat task. When dealing with the topic of food, students could discuss their likes and dislikes, items they would take on a picnic, or preparations for a special occasion. A chat activity may also assist more efficiently in the actual production of new words and expressions, whereas the use of a Web activity for vocabulary acquisition may best serve the purpose of assisting students in identifying new lexical items. Thus, the type of technology chosen should be based on the desired outcome rather than chosen at random.

“B” is for “Backup.”

Since no technology is fail-safe, alternate lesson plans are essential to avoid misuse of time. Although it may seem like twice the work to prepare such alternatives, the time saved in the classroom is immeasurable. In activities that involve the consultation of a Web site, substitute sites should be provided in the event that URLs have changed or that content has been redesigned. For example, in a recent activity on the German Health Insurance system, students were asked to navigate one of Germany’s most popular health insurance Web sites, AOK (<<http://www.aok.de>>), and compare it with the Web site of an American insurance company, Blue Cross-Blue Shield (<<http://www.bluecross.com/>>). Although specific questions were asked, all questions could be answered using other insurance company Web sites, and students were given instructions in the event that either site was unavailable. Another option is to download a chosen Web site to a local computer. Nevertheless, sometimes even alternate Web sites are not sufficient. Entire backup activities should be kept on hand to safeguard the class in case of total technological failure. While some technological difficulties, such as faulty hardware or software incompatibility, can be avoided by checking the technology of a specific classroom in advance, a quick backup plan will allow students to get back on track with minimum difficulty should a crisis occur. Preparing an open-ended Web activity that allows for the use of varied Web sites, using an alternate Web browser, or converting a chat activity to an e-mail activity are all ways in which instructors can provide backup plans without sacrificing the use of technology.

“C” is for “Community.”

When choosing appropriate lessons for use with technology, most language instructors will want to be mindful of the five goal areas of the *Standards*: “Communication,” “Cultures,” “Connections,” “Comparisons,” and “Communities”). Of these goals, Community is one focus that can be greatly strengthened by the use of technology, in particular, CMC and the WWW. These two technologies have allowed students and teachers to experience authentic materials and communicate more effectively both within the classroom and beyond traditional classroom boundaries. In designing an activity, instructors should be aware of how this use of technology can strengthen ultimate communication skills among classmates and heighten understanding of the global community. In Belz’s (2001) study of transatlantic telecollaboration, she noted that both German and American students were excited about participating in the project because they looked forward to making connections with students of another culture. They then brought what they had learned back to their own classmates as well as to others in their community. If we accept that language learning is a social activity, emphasis on community is necessary for successful implementation of technology in the language classroom.

“D” is for “Diversity.”

Although students show increased interest when their classes involve technology-based activities, they can also find doing the same types of tasks monotonous. It is therefore important to implement a variety of tasks, either with different technologies or with different tools. For example, if a Webquest includes face-to-face interaction as well, it helps maintain student interest. Alternating scavenger hunts with more open-ended tasks, or “assigned position” chats with those that allow students to express individual opinions can also obviate predictability. One author of this article worked as an instructor in a program in which the weekly “technology day” of third-semester language courses was routinely filled with worksheets requiring students to visit a site and answer questions. Although this type of activity is common in foreign language classrooms and indeed serves a purpose, teachers will want to vary such activities to encourage communicative and cultural competence as well as to alleviate boredom. To vary the types of WWW activities used, teachers could consider allowing students to create their own pages as a class project or assignment. Also, to add variety to Webquest activities, instructors could include a human element, such as having students use information gathered from the Web sites to find partners in the class.

One can also vary the media within a single theme. A unit in an intermediate language course was organized around a popular television show from the target country but began with an Internet activity based on the show’s Web site. After a few days of video viewing, students visited the Web site again for an exercise in writing e-mail postcards. A final extension of the unit included skits in which students created their own mini-episodes. This activity could also have included CMC with peers from the target country or collaboration with another class at the same college, university, or high school.

Asynchronous chat with key-pals provides another outlet for target language communication for which one does not need to have a complex setup. There are many Web sites, such as “ePals” (<<http://www.epals.com>>), that facilitate matching students to speakers of the target language. Such diversity maintains student and instructor interest, while at the same time taking advantage of the benefits of technology-enhanced activities.

“E” is for “Evaluation.”

As Johnson (1996) notes, “Assessment of . . . technology use . . . needs to be done not to satisfy a state department, legislature, or academic body, but to inform the students themselves, their parents, and the community in which they live” (¶10). Johnson explains that while the proper instructional use of technology is for information processing and real-world, authentic activities (as opposed to drills), evaluation of the results can be ambiguous and not neatly quantifiable. Although studies exist that attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of certain technologies (see, for example, Belz, 2001), it is the duty of the individual instructor to determine

what works in the classroom. Additionally, in evaluating the level-appropriateness of tasks, one may wish to work with both the *National Standards in Foreign Language Education* (available from <<http://www.actfl.org>>), and the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS, online at <<http://cnets.iste.org>>).

The results of technology implementation cannot be measured with the same instruments as traditional instruction. Rather, the growth of cultural and communicative skills may be better measured through more holistic devices, such as portfolios, personal Web sites, student commentaries, and individual interviews. There are various ways to address evaluation of student performance in specific synchronous and asynchronous activities. For example, students could be graded on their manipulation and use of new vocabulary items, preparation, responsiveness, cooperation, quality and quantity of contributions, fluency, and effort or improvement. Shrum & Glisan (2000) offer an example of a chat room evaluation in which students are evaluated on the basis of the frequency, length, quality, and form of entries (p. 354). Students can also become involved in a debriefing activity after a chat session. If transcripts are logged, students can receive a copy of their conversation and engage in a short analysis of their work.

Webquests and activities using the Web can be evaluated with a predetermined set of criteria, such as that found on the Web at <<http://kathyschrock.net/>>. With these criteria, evaluators are asked to consider elements such as authority, bias, and efficiency. Regardless of the task and tool, the criteria for evaluation should be explained to students clearly in the instructions. For example, one should note the minimum number of Web sites expected for completion of an exercise and whether or not it is acceptable to use English-language versions of the Web sites consulted. Another possible method of evaluating technology-enhanced courses is through the use of e-portfolios, a project that allows students to understand, articulate, and experiment with the technologies they have used in their course while maintaining their language skills. The Web site at <<http://transition.alaska.edu/www/portfolios/bookmarks.html>> provides a number of valuable resources and references for instructors interested in implementing this type of evaluation. In general, activities using the Web or synchronous and asynchronous communication can certainly be evaluated in similar fashion to more traditional assignments, that is, based on effort, accuracy, and content. However, evaluation should not stop there. Just as new technologies require new ways of teaching, so too do they require new means of evaluating these new and exciting results.

Conclusion

These guidelines are, of course, only suggestions for how to approach the integration of technology-based tasks in the foreign language classroom. Rather than view these ideas as a one-time plan, there should be an ongoing process of evaluating and rethinking tasks. In fact, another word for evaluation, "assessment," brings us back to the A's, and we can begin again. By *analyzing* what has worked

in the past and *assessing* one's needs for the future, *backing up* one's ideas, seeking out *community* through creative uses of technologies, and *diversifying* the activities in the classroom, instructors can design and implement effective activities that they and their students will find to be both interesting and enriching. The ideas presented in this paper can assist instructors in determining what types of technology are most useful for their goals, while not losing sight of the theory behind those tasks. We have attempted to present a brief overview of the recent research on CALL and its evaluation; nevertheless our review is by no means exhaustive. Although the research, examples, and tips presented here do not guarantee that technology will be fail-safe, they do provide both a theoretical background for technology instruction and ideas for activity design that allow the needs of the student and of the course to guide the implementation of technology. Clearly more research is needed in order to determine the effectiveness of technology-enhanced instruction as compared to face-to-face language learning and to explore how different technological tools may enhance language instruction. We would encourage educators to consider both theoretical and pedagogical contexts in their activity design. The effective merging of theory and practice brings us that much closer to implementing technology-enhanced tasks that are both successful and meaningful to our language learners.

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5

Creating Narrated Multimedia Presentations in the Second and Foreign Language Class

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Abstract

With increasing frequency, teachers are being encouraged to integrate technology into their teaching programs. Their challenge is to find technological applications that promote and enhance learning on the part of their students. A further challenge for second and foreign language teachers is to ensure that the applications reflect principles associated with communicative teaching. This article discusses how students can create narrated multimedia presentations that can be published on the Internet. Suitable for second and foreign language programs at any grade level, this activity would facilitate and encourage authentic communication while developing technological and organizational skills. It would also lend itself well to interdisciplinary teaching and would foster student creativity. This article explores how creating narrated multimedia presentations reflects pedagogical principles associated with second and foreign language teaching and learning, provides information about software that can be used to build them, and suggests research topics related to their creation.

Background

For several decades, foreign language teachers have used technology to enhance their teaching: audio cassette players, VCRs, laserdisc players, satellite television, and now, computers. With the introduction of each new technology, the challenge for teachers is to find a means of taking advantage of the technology in ways that will promote and enhance student learning.

Currently, teachers, including those in second and foreign language instruction, are being encouraged to find meaningful ways to integrate computer technology into their teaching programs (McLafferty, 2000; Spodark, 2000). Turnbull and Lawrence (2002) comment that using computers in second language classes can promote visual, verbal, and kinesthetic learning. They also state that using computers can enhance higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, many studies suggest that computers can have a positive influence on student motivation and attitude (Davies & Williamson, 1998; Laferrière, 1999; Stepp-Greany, 2002; Turnbull & Lawrence, 2002). Studies also suggest that involvement in and satisfaction with courses in which technology is frequently employed are greater than in courses in which technology is not used. (Waxman & Huang, 1997; Liontas, 2001). And Dassier (2001) notes that “most published research establishes unambiguous success when a technological component is added to an existing course, showing that it usually affects positively students’ language learning experience” (p. 25).

For the most part, in today’s second and foreign language classes, the goal is to help students to be able to communicate in the target language. Communication can imply conveying information either by speech or in written form. Ultimately, the goal is to integrate both of these skills, along with listening and reading, into comprehensive fluency (Davies and Williamson, 1998).

Linking Narrated Multimedia Presentations to Pedagogical Principles

An activity that encourages the development of communication skills in students while allowing teachers to integrate technology into their teaching program is the creation of narrated multimedia presentations, which reinforce many of the skills that second and foreign language teachers seek to develop in their students. There are several steps involved in creating these presentations: choosing and researching a topic, writing bulleted points and subpoints for the presentation, preparing a script for the narration portion of the presentation, choosing graphics for the presentation, building the presentation, adding narration, and publishing the presentation on the Web. Most of these steps can be linked to pedagogical principles related to the four language skills associated with foreign language education: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. “In recent years, the foreign language teaching profession has witnessed growing recognition of the importance of a four-skills approach to language learning” (Donaldson and Kötter, p. 531). It is important that foreign language teachers be able to demonstrate that use of the software reinforces the four skills; otherwise, its value would be linked more to the development of computer skills in students than to the development of language competency. Such is, of course, a valid goal.

Beyer and Van Ells (2002) cite several references that underline the importance of integrating technology into the curriculum so that students can acquire skills required for career success (Herron & Moos, 1993; Bailey & Cotlar, 1994).

They also refer to reports indicating that students themselves recognize that computer skills acquired in their classes will be useful in preparing them for future careers (Olivia & Pollastrini, 1995; Draude & Brace, 1999). Insisting on a link between computer activities and the four language skills simply recognizes that the primary concern of second and foreign language teachers must of necessity be the development of language competency in their students.

All four language skills are reinforced when students engage in the creation of narrated multimedia presentations. Listening skills are developed when students listen to audio recordings on the Internet while they do research, when they read their narration to another student when preparing for recording, and when they listen to a finished presentation on the Internet. The speaking skill is reinforced when students discuss work with peers during the preparation and editing phases and when they record a narration. The reading skill is developed when students read information on the Internet, in books, or other resource materials used for researching the chosen topic, when they read the text portion of a presentation that has been published on the Internet, and when they read on-screen prompts for presentation creation and publication. The writing skill is reinforced when students prepare a script for the narration, and when they write the bulleted points and subpoints for a presentation.

In addition to supporting the development of the four language skills, narrated multimedia presentations can be used to focus students on cultural aspects of foreign language study. Donaldson and Kötter (1999) underline the importance of linking the acquisition of the four skills with learning about the culture of places where the target language is spoken. The Internet, which would be an ideal source of information during the research process, is rich with authentic and culturally-laden information for students (Singhal, 1997; Spodark, 2000; Beyer, 2002).

There are other advantages associated with the creation of these presentations as well:

- (1) Students become engaged in interesting, purposeful, and authentic activities involving reading, writing, and oral language.
- (2) They are encouraged to develop reasoning, organizational, and communication skills.
- (3) They examine media materials during the planning phase and develop high-tech media skills in the presentation phase.
- (4) They become engaged in interdisciplinary research and develop skills that will be invaluable in many careers.

Narrated Multimedia Presentations and Communicative Principles

Foreign language teachers today are encouraged to follow the principles associated with the *Communicative Approach* (Lee & Van Patten, 1995; Schulz, 1999), which include presenting work in context, linking work to real-life situations, creating meaningful activities, focusing on language function rather than on

language form, making work student-centered, making use of authentic materials as much as possible, and providing students with a choice.

Many of these principles are inherent in the process of creating and publishing a narrated multimedia presentation. Because their presentations will be posted on the Internet, students will be preparing for a real-life audience. Teachers may even decide, with the students' and, where necessary, the parents' permission, to showcase presentations on a school's Web page. Students' work will emulate a real-life situation, since in many careers people are required to make presentations related to their jobs. Within the confines of their language ability, students will be able to choose a topic of interest to them. Because their ultimate goal is to communicate information to others, they will be focusing on the *function* of the language, not on the *form*. They will be working within a context, and research shows that students learn best when they use language in context (Claybourne, 1999). Students will be working with authentic material when they research their topic, and their work will be student-centered, as opposed to teacher-centered. All of these elements are thought to lead to the development of communicative competency in students, according to the tenets of the Communicative Approach.

Software For Creating Narrated Multimedia Presentations

Many software applications permit users to create narrated multimedia presentations. PowerPoint, an application familiar to many, allows for the easy creation of a narrated presentation; however, in order for users to publish their presentation on the Internet, they require another application, called Microsoft Producer, which synchronizes PowerPoint slides and audio recordings along a timeline. It then assembles the components of the presentation and encodes them into a format that allows the finished presentation to be streamed over the Internet. *Streaming* is a method of data delivery that allows multimedia to be efficiently transported via the Internet.

Researchers at the University of Windsor, Ontario, wanted to investigate the effect of student creation of narrated multimedia presentations on the development of language skills. They recognized, however, that existing technology was too complicated for most students and teachers and decided to simplify and automate the recording and publishing process to enable students and nontechnical users to easily produce and publish sophisticated multimedia presentations on the Web. The resulting process was named NetPublisher. In order to publish work to the Internet, users simply enter a preassigned username and password and then click the link "Publish." The software then automatically sends the publication to the designated web server, where it can be viewed by anyone having a networked computer.

NetPublisher was designed by a team of developers and researchers who recognized the importance of combining technological and pedagogical expertise. The collaboration was important since, in too many cases, software designed for use in schools is technically sound yet lacks pedagogical soundness (Flewelling,

2002). As Beckett et al. (1999) point out, “Design is critical if technology is to have any effect on learning” (p. 287). Davies and Williamson echo that “Designers of a good CALL [computer-assisted language learning] program ... [must] be aware of research and experience indicating successful practices that enable learners to acquire the use of a language quickly and enjoyably” (Davies & Williamson, 1998, p. 11). By including a professor of second and foreign language education on the development team, the developers helped to ensure that the software would meet the needs of students and teachers and that it would reflect sound pedagogical principles.

NetPublisher will work on any Pentium 2-class computer (300+ mhz) with a minimum of 32 MB RAM, a sound card, and a headset microphone. It comes with a built-in client application that makes audio recordings and uploads them to the Internet. It also comes with an application to resize and insert graphics into presentations. The software is accompanied by a teacher’s guide that offers suggestions on how to make NetPublisher an integral part of a teaching program. The guide provides useful information on how to prepare students to create a presentation along with a step-by-step guide on assembling the presentation, recording narration, and publishing the presentation on the Web. Users have reported that the software is extremely easy to use, and even students at the elementary school level have been able to use it to make narrated multimedia presentations. NetPublisher is at the current time a noncommercial product available to others who wish to participate in research studies related to the use of multimedia and language skill development.

Subsequent to the development of NetPublisher, other similar applications were created to meet the need for a user-friendly, stand-alone application for the creation and publication to the web of narrated multimedia presentations. They include Impatica for PowerPoint <www.impatica.com>, Web Cast Studio for Professionals <<http://enterprise.yahoo.com/broadcast>> and iPresentation Suite <www.presenter.com>.

Creating Narrated Multimedia Presentations: The Teacher’s Role

Initially, teachers will need to preteach the vocabulary and grammar the students will require in order to prepare a presentation on a given topic. Teachers may wish to do so through multimedia presentations they create using any of the aforementioned applications. This procedure would familiarize students with the concept of bulleted multimedia presentations and would be an effective way of introducing new material.

After showing students how to create a bulleted presentation, teachers will then need to review with students the steps involved in selecting and researching a topic and discuss how to write a narration script. Throughout the process, teachers will take on the role of facilitator, monitoring student progress, providing assistance when necessary, helping with the editing process, and providing technical assistance.

Choosing a Topic

Teachers may either assign a topic or range of possible topics or have students choose topics that interest them. The level of freedom of choice given to students will be determined by the language ability of the students involved and the wishes of the teacher. The topic should be broad enough to allow for an oral presentation that is of a length appropriate for the grade. Topics can be related to thematic units of study in the teaching program used by teachers, or they may relate to areas of student interest. In pilot studies, elementary-level children have done presentations on animals, their family, food preferences, and sports. At the secondary level, topics have included presentations on cars, Internet security, nuclear energy, and *Le Petit Prince*, a French novel. Sample presentations created during pilot studies can be viewed at the site <<http://www.netresources.ca>>.

Researching the Topic

Researching a topic gives students an opportunity to develop reading and organizational skills, encourages critical thinking, and, if done on the Internet, develops technological skills as well. Students will need enough material for an oral speech of the length prescribed in the assignment, but they should be told that they will not necessarily use all of the information they collect on a topic. They will need to edit researched material and organize it in a format suitable for presentation.

Creating a Presentation Outline

Students should think in terms of creating topics and subtopics for their presentation. The sub-topics should relate directly to their chosen topic. An example of how to organize points and subpoints follows:

Topic: My Vacation in Paris

Subtopics:

- My preparations
 - Reading about Paris on the Internet
 - Buying a plane ticket
 - Making a hotel reservation

- My Arrival
 - The airport
 - The bus ride to the hotel

- The Hotel
 - Location
 - My Room

Sightseeing

- La Tour Eiffel
- Le Louvre
- Other sites of interest

My Departure

- What I'll miss
- Why I want to return next summer

Illustrations

Multimedia presentations can be enhanced with the inclusion of pictures, drawings, or graphics scanned from books, magazines, brochures, Internet sites, and the like, and imported into the presentation. Students may also choose to import digital pictures that they have taken themselves for use in their presentations. Illustrations should complement the topic and subtopics chosen for the presentation. Teachers will need to explain to students the copyright issues governing use of non-original material in a presentation. Students will need to know how to cite material obtained from books, the Internet, and other sources. Illustrations that students choose to include in their presentation will frequently have to be resized in order to ensure that they will upload quickly and play effectively on the Internet. The manual accompanying the NetPublisher software includes information on how to resize pictures, and the software comes with a built-in tool that does the resizing quickly and easily. Because PowerPoint does not come with an application that automatically resizes pictures, those who use PowerPoint must do so by employing a paint or graphics program, such as Paint Shop Pro or Photoshop.

Writing a Script

Students will need to prepare an oral presentation lasting the amount of time prescribed in the assignment. When preparing the script, students should keep in mind the topic and subtopics they have researched. Students should be prepared to address each bulleted heading and subheading in their presentation in their narration.

Script writing should follow the stages inherent in the writing process: (1) write in a way appropriate for the audience being addressed; (2) follow the presentation outline; (3) write an initial draft; (4) revise the initial draft based on consultation with peers or the teacher; (5) edit to improve style and to correct errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation; (6) practice reading the script aloud to ensure that the length is appropriate; and (7) re-edit if necessary.

Guidelines For Bulleted Presentations

There are a few key factors that students should understand when creating bulleted presentations. They should not write every word of their oral presentations on their slides. Instead, they should list key points that reinforce the headings and subheadings in their presentations. It is best to limit the number of bullets on any given slide. Otherwise, the slide will look cluttered and will be difficult to read. An average slide might include two major bulleted points, each of which could have two or three subpoints. On some slides, students may prefer to make the central focus of the slide an image rather than words. The student could write a heading for the image and then allow the image to be described in the narration rather than with words on the slide.

Research Opportunities

The creation of narrated multimedia presentations suggests a number of opportunities for research in second and foreign language classes. Questions which could be investigated include the following:

- What effect does this activity have on student attitude and motivation?
- What effect does this activity have on language acquisition, particularly on the development of oral and written language skills?
- How does the integration of technology affect teaching practices?
- What is the state of readiness in schools for use of technology in this way?
- Does the creation of narrated multimedia presentations facilitate communication about second and foreign language programs between teachers and students and between teachers and parents?

Researchers at the University of Windsor have used NetPublisher in a number of pilot study situations. Professors at the University are using the software to present information to students during lectures. Lectures posted on the Internet allow students at any time to review information presented in class. Many students have commented that they have found this availability to be of great value, especially when preparing for tests or exams, or if they have had to be absent from a lecture.

In one pilot secondary school, students prepared presentations as part of their French as a Second Language program. Students were excited to be able to show their finished presentations posted on the Internet to their friends and parents. Several students commented that they were usually nervous when appearing in front of the class, but because they were able to prepare their presentations in advance and because the narration was prerecorded, they felt much more at ease when speaking French.

Several teachers have suggested other uses for the software. Teachers who knew in advance that they would be absent and that a teacher qualified in their subject area would not be available could prerecord a lesson for their students. They could post information on the Internet for parents about their teaching program or post information for students and parents about upcoming tests, homework assignments, and the like. They could also create tutorials for students on topics related to the subject being studied.

Readers who would like to learn more about the NetPublisher software or who would be interested in using the software to evaluate its effectiveness in promoting language skill development may obtain additional information and view sample presentations by visiting the Web site, <<http://www.netresources.ca>>, or by e-mailing Dr. Janet Flewelling at <flewell@uwindsor.ca>.

Conclusion

Opportunities to integrate technology into teaching programs are increasing. Stepp-Greany (2002) observes, "The use of technology, specifically multimedia, for foreign language instruction has expanded rapidly in the United States during the last two decades" (p. 165). The challenge for foreign language teachers is to make use of the technology available to them in meaningful ways that will help students to acquire language skills effectively and enjoyably. As Hall (1998) notes, "With the help of a computer, it is now possible to offer learners a more stimulating and varied language learning experience than ever before." Asking students to create narrated multimedia presentations is one way that can help teachers to enrich the communicative nature of their classes while encouraging students to work cooperatively in a student-centered, project-based environment.

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INTASC Model Foreign Language Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development

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Abstract

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) is a nonprofit organization representing 57 chief education officers who, through the Council of Chief State School Officers, are responsible for setting state education policy. INTASC standards address what beginning teachers should know, how they should behave, and what they should be able to do. At the present time, 33 states and territories are members of INTASC. In May 2002, a committee of 18 practicing teachers and teacher educators with expertise in a variety of languages and nominated by their professional organizations completed the drafting of the INTASC Foreign Language Standards and aligned them not only with the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (the “Five Cs”), but also with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). This article describes the context for the development of INTASC standards and implications for future licensing examinations, educational policy, and curriculum reforms.

Compared to other countries, the United States has a weak language policy, and foreign language curricular guidelines and systematic outcome assessments are practically nonexistent. (Schulz, 1998, p. 6)

One of our goals is to promote dialogue among our readers in an effort to identify our commonalities as well as begin to understand our differences. In other words, our ultimate goal is to open communication among our many cultures to foster connections and comparisons within our communities. (Medley & Tesser, 2000, p. 142)

In May 2002, a group of 18 teachers and teacher educators, along with administrators and staff consultants from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), sat in a hotel atrium in Alexandria, Virginia, and toasted the completion of the basic draft of the *Model Standards for Licensing Beginning Foreign Language Teachers: A Resource for State Dialogue*. Although the final draft of the document would not be completed for another month after an additional meeting of the group's smaller subcommittee, participants were satisfied that the process had come to a successful closure. The text developed during this process reflected the consensus of those present as well as their constituencies: the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the language-specific organizations—the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI), the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), the American Classical League (ACL), the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR), the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS), the Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA), the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT), and the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ).

The process had begun more than a year before and had involved three meetings of the entire group, as well as many separate meetings of the subcommittee. In addition, the process had provided an opportunity for open debate among the committee members, who not only represented different language groups, both modern and classical, but who came also from what Claire Kramsch (1995) has called our “different discourse communities.” Represented were K-12 language educators, as well as college and university “content” and “pedagogy” educators. Literally and symbolically the group members spoke different languages and came from different cultural backgrounds. In this article we shall focus on the process and its participants because, as we introduce the final draft of the INTASC Standards, we strongly believe that readers must be aware of issues and negotiations that took place in their development.

The Context of Foreign Language Educational Reform

The educational reform movement begun in the 1980s is now part of professional dialogue among educators in all fields and at all levels of education. In the teaching of languages other than English, several different commissions and com-

mittees composed of members appointed by national professional organizations worked on different kinds of standards. Although focusing on part of the issue, each group envisioned a goal of curricular reform that would strengthen the teaching of languages at all levels. Like the “Five Cs” of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 1999), the ultimate goal has many interlocking parts: recruitment of teachers for our schools, assurance of high quality teacher education programs, the assessment and professional development of beginning teachers, the recognition of high quality performance by experienced teachers, and several others. Professional development became a topic in many annual meetings of national organizations. The Modern Language Association (MLA), traditionally not involved in teacher preparation, remained neutral in the discussions for the first few years. As then MLA Executive Director Phyllis Franklin (1999) explained,

The public laying of blame that marked most arguments about the schools in the mid-1980s and early 1990s had a political edge that may have encouraged academics to view reform as more hype than substance. And the reformers’ early focus on assessment through objective tests may also have been off-putting. (p. ix)

However, the MLA could not remain in an observer’s position for long, since “content area knowledge” in foreign languages was the purview of departments of languages and literatures, most of which are constituents of the MLA. In 1993, the MLA Executive Council authorized the development of the Teacher Education Project that culminated in the publication of *Preparing a Nation’s Teachers: Models for English and Foreign Language Programs* (1999).

As more of the professional organizations conducted discussions of teacher education programs and curricula, policy makers around the country began introducing high-stakes testing of teachers and their students in all fields. Prompted by the findings of second language acquisition research and the recommendations of the professional organizations, many states began offering some FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools) courses, as well as longer sequences of language instruction. Further prompted by research and the 1999 student standards, more demands were placed on pre-service teacher education programs as well as on candidates for teaching positions. As we began to have national discussions, we raised more questions than answers for one another and for policy makers. Renate A. Schulz (2002) summarized the state of affairs in a recent issue of *Foreign Language Annals*:

Despite the *Standards*, we still have no consensus about what defines elementary or intermediate-level courses. We still have no consensus about what constitutes the “contents” of foreign language education. Is it predominantly skills instruction without defined contents? Are we serving largely as service and support instruction for other fields in the curriculum, as implied by the standard called “Connections”? (p. 290)

Even as we language educators continue to argue and “agree to disagree,” policies are being made locally and nationally that will impact our teaching, whether we teach in a College of Education, a College of Arts and Sciences, or a K-12 school setting. In an effort to strengthen our teaching profession and to add our voice to the policy making affecting our field, professional language organizations led by ACTFL began clamoring for a place in the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and in the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). Each of these bodies affects teacher education and professional development.

NCATE, a coalition of 33 national education organizations, accredits teacher education programs nationally. In 1998, the National Foreign Language Standards Collaborative (a group of professional language organizations that has remained active since their development of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* [NSFLEP, 1999]) joined NCATE as a member organization. In 2001, the first draft of NCATE’s model standards for foreign language teacher education programs became available for review by the field. Presented to the profession at ACTFL 2002 in Salt Lake City, the NCATE Foreign Language Standards are available through the ACTFL website, <www.actfl.org> .

NBPTS, established in 1987, has developed standards for the advanced certification of experienced teachers through a process of assessment and evaluation over an extended period of time. In 2001, the *World Languages Other than English Standards* became available for those teachers who wish to work toward this national recognition. Guidelines for application according to each participating state are available through the NBPTS website, <www.nbpts.org>. Concurrently with the development of the NBPTS and NCATE standards, came the writing of the INTASC document. In the vision of the three-pronged approach (pre-service, beginning career, and in-service teacher preparation) to foreign language professional development, all three committees anchored their deliberations and documents on the student standards of 1999, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (NSFLEP, 1999). Moreover, conscious overlapping of committee membership in the task forces provided for easy collaboration among the three. With the completion of the INTASC standards, foreign language educators completed the circle. NCATE provided guidance for teacher preparation programs, INTASC provided guidance for beginning teachers, and NBPTS provided guidance for veteran teachers.

Council of Chief State School Officers and INTASC

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)¹ is a consortium of state education agencies, higher education institutions, and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the education, licensing, and ongoing professional development of teachers. Created in 1987, INTASC’s primary constituency is state education agencies responsible for teacher licensing

and professional development. Its work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with pedagogical understanding to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. As a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), INTASC is subject to the mission of its parent organization as described in its website, <www.ccsso.org/intasc.html>: “CCSSO, through leadership, advocacy, and service, assists chief state school officers and their organizations in achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life.” INTASC’s mission is to promote standards-based reform through the development of model standards and assessments for beginning teachers. To carry out this mission, INTASC provides a vehicle for states to work jointly on formulating model policies to reform teacher preparation and licensing and provides a mechanism for states to collaborate on developmental projects, such as crafting new instruments to assess the classroom performance of a teacher. INTASC also sponsors a series of seminars annually, bringing together state education agencies, institutions of higher education, researchers, and professional associations committed to the principles of teaching and assessment endorsed by the consortium. These seminars present the cutting-edge work being carried out on these issues and provide an opportunity for formal and informal networking among the participants. The agency provides a vehicle for communication among several constituents in an effort to affect policy issues and bring about positive reform that may be consequential to teaching and learning. No state or constituent is required to adopt these standards, but rather they are to be a “resource” as states and local districts begin discussions of what constitutes good teaching and how one may be able to assess it.

The Foreign Language Standards Drafting Committee

The 18 members of the drafting committee represented 15 different states. Nine members were K-12 teachers or administrators; 8 were college and university language, literature, or language education faculty; and one represented a state department of education. Languages represented by the group were Classics, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The committee was co-chaired by Martha Abbott, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia, and Dale Lange, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The co-chairs were primarily responsible for drafting the many versions of the document as it underwent changes during the scheduled meetings as well as between such gatherings. The meeting scheduled for September 13, 2001, was cancelled, but after that date, a smaller subcommittee composed of the two co-chairs, a high school teacher, an elementary school teacher, and a teacher educator met periodically to complete the drafts that were reviewed by the entire committee.

The Process

The committee represented many discourse communities as well as many different constituencies. The initial questions, some of which were revisited at almost every meeting, dealt with how to frame the document. Should the Five Cs provide the framework? Should the NBPTS five core principles provide the basis? Should the six performance-based standards of NCATE be the guideline? Should we follow the outline in the 10 core principles of the INTASC model standards? Should we have a completely different framework? What about the young teacher who finishes an NCATE-accredited program and enters the field wishing to be assessed through the INTASC standards? These were some of the questions debated by the committee as it reviewed available research findings as well as each committee member's own individual context. In the end, the group opted to follow the INTASC 10 core principles, adapting them to the field of foreign language education.

Basic to the INTASC core principles is the idea that each one should address "content, disposition, and performance." In other words, what should a beginning teacher know, be like, and be able to do? Although at first glance it might be easier to describe "content," such description proved to be as difficult as that of "disposition," since the definition of "what a beginning teacher should know" depended greatly on the perspective of each member of the committee. In the crafting of the standards as well as in the writing of descriptive passages and examples, the committee took into account how assessment tools might be created to measure beginning teacher performance. Much discussion went into the issue of misuse of such testing and the need for professional organizations to have a voice in any state-mandated testing of teachers. Furthermore, since the same basic principles will guide teachers of modern, as well as classical languages, committee members took into account the limitations that might come from widespread application.

The 10 Core Principles:

Principle #1: Content Knowledge. Language teachers are proficient in the language they teach. They understand language as a system, how students learn a language, and how language and culture are linked. They are knowledgeable about the cultures of the people who speak the language. Using this knowledge, they create learning experiences that help students develop language proficiency and build cultural understanding.

Principle #2: Learner Development. Language teachers understand how students learn and develop and can relate this to their development of language proficiency and cultural understanding. They provide learning experiences that are appropriate to and support learners' development.

Principle #3: Diversity of Learners. Language teachers understand how learners differ in their knowledge, experiences, abilities, needs, and approaches to language learning, and create instructional opportunities and environments that are appropriate for the learner and that reflect learner diversity.

Principle #4: Instructional Strategies. Language teachers understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to help learners develop language proficiency, build cultural understanding, and foster critical thinking skills.

Principle #5: Learning Environment. Language teachers create an interactive, engaging, and supportive learning environment that encourages student self-motivation and promotes their language learning and cultural understanding.

Principle #6: Communication. Language teachers use effective verbal and non-verbal communication, and multimedia resources, to foster language development and cultural understanding.

Principle #7: Planning for Instruction. Language teachers plan instruction based on their knowledge of the target language and cultures, learners, standards-based curriculum, and the learning context.

Principle #8: Assessment. Language teachers understand and use a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student learning, to inform language and culture instruction, and to report student progress.

Principle #9: Reflective Practice and Professional Development. Language teachers are reflective practitioners who continually evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others and who actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally.

Principle #10: Community. Language teachers foster relationships with schools colleagues, families, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

As the committee debated each principle and the examples to be included, it became apparent that members of the committee had begun to use a common vocabulary that had been adopted through negotiation. In an effort to facilitate the reading of the document, the group decided to add a glossary of terms. As the committee revised one of the final drafts of the document, more than 100 terms were added to the glossary. In the end, the committee included only 34 terms that had clearly caused the most trouble to the group or that the group believed should be defined for a non-language-education reader.

The INTASC standards point to a beginning teacher (one in the first 3 years of teaching) as a well prepared, linguistically proficient, and culturally savvy individual. Moreover, the beginning teacher who meets these standards recognizes individual differences in students and is able to deal with personal biases and

belief systems that may affect language learning as well as language teaching. For a beginning teacher to meet these standards, it is clear that teacher preparation programs will have to continue the often-difficult dialogue between content area departments and teacher education departments within institutions. These discussions will necessarily involve a process that will bring together departments of linguistics, language and literature, and language education. In a review of the literature on second language teacher education, Gloria Vélez-Rendón (2002) suggests that

inquiry focusing on both pre-service and in-service second language teacher education will enable us to gain insights into what it means to teach a second language, what informs the learning-to-teach process, how language teachers develop understandings of their subject matter, and how this process influences teachers' perceptions of themselves as second language teachers. (p. 465)

The INTASC standards are a resource for generating much data for such inquiry. INTASC director M. Jean Miller, in a letter that accompanies the standards, charges language educators, policy makers, and teachers themselves to foster community-wide discussions on the issues addressed by the standards.

Conclusion

Our profession has started the 21st century by reflecting on our practices, products, and perspectives. When we discuss foreign language teacher preparation in the academy, we often speak from our own perspectives and protect our own territories. Whether these standards will help “fix” the problems in American education remains to be seen. What they can do is provide focus for our discussions and bring the different constituencies together in dialogue. The process of reflecting on teacher education in general and, in particular, on who should be responsible for assuring that beginning teachers meet basic standards is the most positive outcome of these documents. Professional development for ourselves and for those who will come after us is “our” business as much as it is “their” business. We must continue to have a voice in matters that relate to the future of our profession.

Notes

- ¹ The description of INTASC and its purpose as well as all its programs can be obtained through the website, <www.ccsso.org/intasc.html>.

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Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs in Foreign Languages

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Abstract

For the past 20 years educators have debated whether alternative teacher certification, or preparation, is a valid solution to the critical shortage now facing the profession. In foreign language education, Kennesaw State University (KSU) has developed an alternative preparation program designed to give candidates the same knowledge, skills, and dispositions imparted in traditional undergraduate preparation and to hold these individuals to the same standards required of undergraduates in foreign language education. This article describes the program, discusses the disadvantages and rewards of the assessment plan, and offers observations on the future of nontraditional preparation of teachers.

Background

For nearly 20 years alternative teacher preparation (ATP) has been providing educational opportunities for people seeking certification outside the traditional 4-year college model, thus alleviating the teacher shortages facing the nation, while at the same time charting the course for education reform. Among the first states to initiate such programs in the early 1980s were New Jersey and Texas. By 1990, at least 33 states provided some form of alternative route to certification (Buechler, 1992). Two years later, the number had risen to 40 (Feistritzer, 1993), and today almost every state has some type of nontraditional program to prepare teachers for certification. According to Feistritzer and Chester (1994), in a report for the National Center for Education Information, an estimated 50,000 people have been certified through ATP programs since 1984. New Jersey's program, for example, has doubled the number of qualified applicants for teaching positions since its inception (Klagholz, 2001). While the primary mission of these programs usually is to address the teacher shortage, at the same time they serve as a tool to recruit

minority and nontraditional students. As a result, alternative programs certify greater percentages of minority groups than do universities, and New Jersey and Texas are among those states with the highest such percentages (Feistritzer, 1993). In addition, ATP attracts a greater number of candidates teaching or willing to teach in urban schools (Shen, 1998).

Other than a difference in the number of requirements, the main characteristics that distinguish ATP from a 4-year college program are the sequence in which certification requirements are fulfilled and the type of field experience provided. Traditional candidates first complete their coursework, then student teach, later receive a degree in education and a teaching certificate, and ultimately seek a full-time teaching position. Their alternative counterparts already have a degree, usually not in education, which, among other things, qualifies them for some type of "conditional" certificate. They then do the equivalent of student teaching through a supervised internship and complete course requirements as they teach. However, no two programs are alike, and the variations are numerous. While having a teaching license and a job are typical entry prerequisites (Whiting & Klotz, 2000), other models follow a condensed version of the college education curriculum leading to certification, followed by an internship (Hart, 2001). Some programs, on the other hand, require the participant to have prior teaching experience (Giannangelo, 2001). For those having job offers, the length and rigor of preservice induction is another variable, including two (Schoon & Sandoval, 2000), five (Broyles, 1992), or six courses (Giannangelo, 2001), and short field experiences (Lutz & Hutton, 1989). Another important variation is the administration of the program. It may be offered through a university, a school district, an independent education agency, or some combination thereof.

The Debate

Arguments in favor of ATP have frequently centered on the characteristics of the teachers it certifies. Dill, Hayes, and Johnson (1999), for example, argue that young traditional graduates tend to lack life experiences suited to provide for the emotional, intellectual, and academic needs of their students, whereas more mature, alternatively certified teachers are more likely to establish connections with poor inner-city school children. Schoon and Sandoval (2000) report that one program in Indiana has been very successful in recruiting underrepresented groups to teach in urban settings; 83% of those completing the program are African-American. It would seem then that programs successful in recruiting nontraditional students (with respect to age, ethnicity, background, etc.) who are also willing to teach in these schools would provide "a good match."

ATP opponents, such as Wise and Darling-Hammond (1992), however, argue that this match is seriously flawed in that the most disadvantaged groups of students are precisely those who get the teachers with the least subject knowledge and pedagogical skills. If, as Shen (1998) indicated, the percentage of minority teachers who do not plan to remain in teaching is higher for ATP, then it would

seem that these programs merely aggravate the situation in urban settings. However, the question of attrition rates is far from clear-cut. Guyton, Fox, and Sisk's (1991) study of 1st-year teachers in Georgia found that while ATP teachers were more likely to state that they wished to leave the profession, they actually had a lower attrition rate than their traditional counterparts. Klagholz (2001) and Adams and Dial (1993) report similar findings. On the contrary, Stoddart and Folden (1995) found that traditionally prepared teachers remain in the classroom longer. In addition, Stevens and Dial (1993) found that participants' reasons for choosing an alternative program are not always related to the desire to teach. Some simply want a change from a present job or have no other job options. It is interesting to note, though, that when asked about plans for the future, the younger teachers were more likely to state that they were not sure about continuing.

While descriptions of programs constitute a large part of the literature (for an overview, see Holmes, 2001), there has also been a trend in recent years toward empirical studies that compare teachers from alternative programs with those from traditional programs. These studies address various issues: attitudes and beliefs (Ackley, Balaban & Pascarelli, 1999), principals' perceptions (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001), teacher concerns (Truell, 1999), classroom management (Martin & Shoho, 1999), satisfaction with field experience (Shoho & Martin, 1999), alienation (Turley & Nakai, 1999), teacher adaptation to student diversity (Sawyer, 2000), and so forth. Undoubtedly for both groups of teachers the most important question is that of teacher effectiveness. As ATP programs continue to provide teachers employed on temporary certificates with the opportunity to earn full certification, concerns about quality expressed early on by organizations such as the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education remain (Williamson, 1984). Wise and Darling-Hammond (1992), for example, adamantly oppose allowing anyone not fully certified to teach and propose attracting more nontraditional students through post-baccalaureate programs instead. Leibbrand (2000) also shares this preference for post-baccalaureate programs overseen by accredited institutions.

When it comes to providing evidence to substantiate arguments for or against ATP, it seems that for every finding, there is another one to contradict it. For example, Wilson (1991) found ATP candidates to have deficiencies in subject matter knowledge, while Klagholz's (2001) findings indicate higher certification test scores. In addition to the existence of contradictory findings, conclusions by one party have been reviewed and criticized by another for various reasons. For example, Lutz and Hutton's study (1989) claiming that ATP produces good teachers was scrutinized by Neumann (1994) and found to lack the appropriate information to enable the authors to have reached their conclusion. So who is right? To say the least, the conflicting results indicate that findings about one program cannot be generalized for another, as there are too many variables. It seems likely that as long as there are ATP programs, differences in opinion will remain part of the debate. Furthermore, the tendency to use statewide performance data obscures the differences between programs and thus is not helpful in identifying quality alternative programs.

For those interested in improving ATP programs to provide a viable option that assures quality teacher preparation and good performance results, we need sound, comparative empirical studies that focus on the ultimate outcome, student achievement. Positive performance results that indicate no qualitative differences between traditional and alternative programs (Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000) can then be used to validate each program and should also provide clues as to what combination of characteristics works for ATP. Corbin (1992), while highly critical of ATP programs, nevertheless, concludes that, “educators need to begin to make qualitative distinctions between the kinds of ACPs (Alternative Certification Programs) that hold promise and those that do harm” (p. 244). However, as long as demand exceeds supply, administrators, such as the one quoted by Weichel (1999, p. 21), will hire teachers who are not fully certified.

Description of the Program

At Kennesaw State University the alternative teacher preparation program in foreign language education (FLED) began in 1995-96 in response to the critical need for certified foreign language teachers in Georgia and at the request of the individual then in charge of teacher certification at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). At first there were very few alternative preparation candidates, but gradually the word spread among teachers, and the program began to grow. Today foreign language education faculty work with approximately 60 to 65 candidates at any given time. Many of these teachers completed their baccalaureate and graduate education outside the United States and are experienced professionals. Others are changing careers. The program’s target audience is, however, limited to foreign language teachers employed on a temporary certificate (provisional certificate, intern certificate, conditional certificate, or professional educator permit). The sole requirement for entry into the program is that candidates have a valid contract with a Georgia school system, which, in turn, means that they have passed the criminal background check and have either passed the Praxis II subject field examination or obtained a rating of “Advanced” or higher on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), thus guaranteeing, prior to their entry into the classroom, a minimum level of proficiency in the target language that might counterbalance their lack of teaching experience. Those entering the program under the auspices of the Georgia PSC-approved alternative preparation program (Georgia TAPP) must have a bachelor’s degree in their teaching field and a passing score on PRAXIS I (or acceptable SAT, ACT, or GRE scores). In addition, they must maintain a minimum 2.75 grade point average in conformity with standards established by the KSU College of Education, and pass the Praxis II within their first year of teaching. The fact that candidates must have an undergraduate major in the chosen teaching field when they enter the classroom is seen by the PSC as an acceptable substitute in the absence of the Praxis II scores.

The ATP program in foreign languages parallels the approved undergraduate program in foreign language education that currently exists as part of the Professional Teacher Education Unit (PTEU) of Kennesaw State University. It does not lead to a second baccalaureate degree and is administered by the Department of Foreign Languages. For the alternative preparation program in foreign language education, the PSC has granted a waiver allowing alternative preparation to include languages other than those for which KSU has an approved undergraduate degree program. As a result, individuals enrolled in the program have been certified in German, Japanese, and Latin, in addition to French and Spanish.

As with any endeavor that does not readily fit an already established and recognized format, in this case traditional teacher preparation, program quality is an ongoing concern, particularly because one of the most telling critiques of such programs is that they offer a “quick fix” from which quality of preparation is notably absent. The cornerstone of the KSU model is that it is standards-driven and parallels the undergraduate major, thereby avoiding as much as possible any diminution in curricular or programmatic rigor. Thus, those alternative preparation candidates who do not have the equivalent of a major in the target language must also either take the courses for the undergraduate major or provide other evidence (standardized examinations, or study or residence abroad, among others) that they have met the program standards in both pedagogy and content area as set forth by the PSC. Content area requirements also meet the criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Thus, all teacher candidates recommended by the Kennesaw State University program for “full certification” in the state of Georgia are required to satisfy identical standards.

To meet the standards, traditionally prepared candidates complete a prescribed program leading to a degree. Those in the alternative preparation track already have a degree, have met certain minimum requirements for the “temporary” license, and, once enrolled in KSU’s approved program, receive an individualized professional development plan, or evaluation letter, that outlines their path to “full certification.” Whether former Peace Corps volunteers, civil servants, scientists, or teachers of English as a foreign language, they arrive with a wealth of personal and professional experience to share with their students, all of which must be considered when one is planning their program. These individuals do not complete a predetermined number of courses at KSU as do the degree candidates, but they must produce evidence that the standards have been met. When ATP candidates successfully complete the program prescribed in the evaluation letter, they may be recommended to the Georgia PSC for certification.

In addition to academic preparation, a key ingredient in any teacher education program is appropriate mentoring. To date, program faculty members have attempted to provide the same mentoring to alternative preparation candidates as they do for undergraduate teacher candidates. This task has proved to be difficult during semesters in which the ATP candidates are not enrolled in courses, and sustained contact, other than e-mail correspondence, is problematic. As a result,

beginning in fall 2002, KSU faculty will work on a more formal basis with the principal, appropriate staff, and department chair in schools that employ alternative preparation candidates newly affiliated with KSU. In this way, the FLED faculty will be available to educate and assist the school personnel as everyone collaborates to facilitate the success and ultimate retention of these new teachers. It is expected that this closer relationship will provide the ATP candidate with an additional source of the attentive and sometimes creative listening, moral support, and advice that are so important to the process of creating effective teachers. This structure does not, however, mean that the necessity for these candidates to satisfy program criteria and score well on standardized tests that measure their competence in the teaching field will be ignored.

Program Assessment

The alternative preparation program in FLED came into existence because of external demand rather than as the result of departmental initiatives and, for this reason, was never expected to expand to its present size. As numbers have grown, a coherent program based on the Georgia PSC standards has emerged, and assessment is becoming more sophisticated. Originally, there was no difference between the assessment of the traditional preparation program and its teacher candidates and of the alternative preparation program and its teacher candidates. As long as the number of traditional candidates was greater than the number of alternative preparation candidates, using identical assessment measures for each group without any attempt to compare or contrast results from the two "tracks" in teacher preparation worked reasonably well. However, by 1998, alternative preparation candidates outnumbered traditional teacher candidates. In 1999-2000, the percentage of ATP candidates rose to 70%, a disparity clearly reflected in foreign language education courses. By 2000-2001, total enrollment in the three non-field-experience FLED courses offered was 62. Of the 62, 77.4% were ATP candidates. Fall semester 2002 data, however, depart from this trend. ATP candidate enrollment in the two non-field-experience FLED courses offered every fall declined to 60%. The increased enrollment in the traditional program parallels the overall growth experienced by the University: 58 students in the fall of 2002, in contrast to 62 in the fall and spring semesters of the academic year 2001-2002.

As Kennesaw State University began to comply with the SACS and University System of Georgia (USG) mandate to assess programs and to report the findings, and faculty began to scrutinize program outcomes, more than just differences in numbers (traditional vs. nontraditional) began to emerge. Those in the alternative preparation group were, and remain, more specific in their expectations because they are already employed as full-time teachers and thus are dealing with students on a daily basis. Not surprisingly, many of their demands center around the need for immediate solutions to classroom management and discipline. The undergraduates, on the other hand, prefer to focus more on content and delivery of the material. The obvious and ideal solution would be to separate the two groups in

all coursework in foreign language education. Budget constraints and the need to generate more credit hours per course make the creation of two groups impossible at the present time. Yet, because all candidates must demonstrate that they meet the same standards, a partial resolution of the difficulty has been to emphasize that they are all participating in a standards-based program and will be evaluated and eventually recommended for certification depending upon whether or not they have met the standards.

Therefore, all teacher candidates complete the prescribed “approved program.” Because the ATP candidates are already employed as teachers in a school setting, guidelines recognize that, as with foreign language proficiency, “seat time” in a class is not the most critical factor. But the fact that they are already employees of a school district and have in some cases been teaching 2 or more years when they decide to seek full licensure/certification complicates the assessment process. In addition, approximately 50% are non-native speakers of English who have completed all or most of their schooling in their home country and who have little or no experience with schooling in this country. Few have majored in a language, in linguistics, or in literature in their home country. As a result, both the curriculum and the assessment plan for the program have presented major challenges, and over time some general concerns have emerged as a result of both formal and informal assessment.

The first concern is the language proficiency of the candidates, both in English and occasionally in the target language (TL). Language deficiencies, if they exist, are present when the candidate enters the program and reveal themselves in class assignments completed in the TL or in English. Bearing in mind that the FLED faculty must certify that individuals have met all the standards prescribed by the PSC, the “Policies and Procedures” document that candidates receive as an enclosure to their official evaluation letter now includes a stipulation that the FLED faculty reserve the right to require that candidates enhance their English or target language skills as a condition for the final recommendation for certification. In addition, for non-native speakers of English, the initial interview is conducted in English, thus providing a preliminary assessment of English language proficiency. The same provision, however, would be difficult to implement for the target language because the faculty do not speak all of the languages represented in the program. Therefore, we must rely on coursework and the expertise of colleagues to evaluate proficiency levels in languages other than French, German, or Spanish.

As mentioned above, both the undergraduate program in teacher education and the alternative preparation program are standards-based. In the case of foreign languages, this designation means that the program must address standards established by the Georgia PSC in the teaching field and also in the professional education sequence (< <http://www.gapsc.com/rules.asp> >). These standards are tied to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (< <http://www.actfl.org> >), and to the Georgia Department of Education’s Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) in Foreign Languages (< <http://www.gadoe.org> > or < www.glc.k12.ga.us >). The latter are based upon the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* and have been revised to incorpo-

rate the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 1999). In addition, the National Foreign Language Standards Collaborative, in conjunction with ACTFL, has designed standards for foreign language teacher education programs that were presented to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and approved on October 19, 2002. These standards are now being incorporated into the traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs.

Furthermore, the FLED program is part of the Professional Teacher Education Unit (PTEU) at Kennesaw State University and, therefore, incorporates elements of the Unit's overall assessment plan and strategies, in which evaluation of teacher work samples and assessment of teacher impact on student learning play an increasingly important role. The continuous assessment plan of the PTEU, combined with program assessment information compiled for a comprehensive self-study report for the FLED program, dictated several changes in the way ATP candidates are evaluated. For example, formative evaluations of coursework are reported at the end of the term and placed in the candidates' advisement folders. Candidates also submit a self-evaluation to be added to the advisement file after each course. The final summative evaluation of each candidate is built around the professional portfolio evaluated by the FLED faculty according to predetermined criteria, which are available to alternative preparation candidates when they receive the guidelines for preparation of their portfolios. Results of the portfolio evaluation will then provide data for program assessment beyond general information about the number of candidates completing the program, awards won by program completers, and the percentage of candidates who continue in the profession for more than 3 to 5 years after certification. The essential point in all the data collection and analysis is that it be designed to provide information to help improve the program, thereby ensuring that its "graduates" are competent in their teaching field and reassuring skeptics that the appropriate quality indicators have been respected.

Currently there are four major assessment points in the program. The first is the entry point for Kennesaw State University, which requires that all ATP candidates be employed, teaching full-time in an accredited P-12 institution. Because their credentials have already been evaluated by the PSC, candidates receive temporary teaching certificates. FLED faculty in turn evaluate their records and draw up the required professional development plan outlining the program requirements. Ideally, candidates begin by taking Second Language Acquisition (FLED 3303), a requirement that allows the instructor to complete a mid-term and final evaluation that will, when necessary, alert members of the FLED faculty to potential problems, including deficiencies in English or target language skills. FLED 3303 is thus the second assessment point. The third arrives in the Methods, Materials, and Curriculum courses (FLED 4410 and FLED 4412) that begin to afford a perspective on the candidates' ability to write effective lesson and unit plans and to assess student learning, their capacity to analyze and reflect upon their own teaching, and their potential to become active members of the profession. These major assess-

ment points are overseen by the FLED faculty, who are the individuals responsible for the quality and professional integrity of the program and who must request that the College of Education recommend candidates for “full certification.”

The final assessment point has been, and will remain, the teaching internship or practicum (FLED 4498), which replaces student teaching. It must consist of one academic year of full-time teaching, supervised and evaluated by a member of the FLED faculty. It was designed specifically to meet the needs of alternative preparation candidates and is offered exclusively to this group. Reactions from candidates have been uniformly positive, and those individuals supervised by FLED faculty are still teaching. However, because of scarce resources in the department and the provision that staff development credit may be used to satisfy the Georgia PSC standards, this internship is now often completed under the supervision of the school district in which the candidate is employed. Depending upon the district, assessment data and overall progress reports during the internship may not be sent to KSU.

As our reporting requirements to the PTEU and ultimately to NCATE and the PSC become more stringent, we will need more information on these teaching internships. Rather than ask the districts to transmit something to us, we have decided to require that all candidates, not just those enrolled in the Kennesaw State University practicum, complete and present a professional teaching portfolio upon completion of the internship. In addition, they will be asked to obtain a letter of recommendation from an appropriate school official (principal, assistant principal for instruction, etc.) prior to our requesting that the candidate be recommended for the clear renewable teaching certificate. We anticipate that the professional teaching portfolio as well as an administrative endorsement will ensure a more uniform assessment of candidates’ skills and knowledge prior to our making a recommendation for certification.

The use of a portfolio as the summative assessment to be submitted at the end of the program parallels requirements for all undergraduate programs in teacher education at KSU. Because our programs and, therefore, our candidates will be evaluated according to specific performance outcomes, we must first ask if they have the basic content and pedagogical knowledge. The next question asks if their students are learning. For each of these questions we must also ask, “How do we know?” and “How did we find out?” The evaluation checklist and comment form completed on a course-by-course basis by the instructor provides quantifiable data essential to the assessment process.

The end-of-program portfolio presentation, required of all alternative preparation candidates, represents a major revision of the program assessment plan. It is expected to begin as a developmental portfolio produced to satisfy assignments in individual courses and to evolve into a professional portfolio by the time candidates have completed the program. For this final version, candidates will be expected to construct portfolios in such a way that they demonstrate their abilities in the classroom, particularly the ways in which they have been able to encourage student learning and document positive results. It should stand as evidence that

candidates are critical thinkers, problem solvers (i.e., able to determine how to solve the portfolio puzzle), and productive and active members of a professional community who are able to develop analytical (i.e., higher level thinking) skills in their students and help set them on a path to become thoughtful and productive members of a global society. Finally, the portfolio must be submitted in an electronic format, thereby providing additional evidence that candidates have met the Georgia Technology Standards for Educators.

Candidates also have the opportunity to evaluate the program, although they more readily provide written end-of-course comments than return a comprehensive survey about the effectiveness of the overall program. Unsolicited feedback has been uniformly positive and emphasizes the responsiveness of the faculty to their needs. The fact that the number of candidates continues to grow and that many drive 30 to 50 miles to KSU after school when there are other opportunities closer to their school, is, we believe, a positive indicator corroborated by their end-of-course evaluations.

To date, the assessment plan for the alternative preparation program has been largely a learn-by-doing exercise. The abundant literature on alternative preparation in all its guises is notably silent about foreign languages. The same is true for the literature on the use of portfolios as an assessment tool. However, just as alternative preparation is becoming a regular fixture on the landscape of American higher education, so too are portfolios. Their successful use in individual courses augurs well for their implementation as a summative evaluation.

Thoughts for the Future

The Secretary of Education of the United States, Rod Paige (2002), and other prominent individuals from the private and public sectors have criticized traditional teacher preparation programs, labeling them inadequate at best and citing data that indicate that traditionally prepared teachers are not competent in their teaching fields (Keller & Galley, 2002). Critics claim that inadequate training of traditionally prepared teachers is reflected in the achievement gap between majority and minority students, hence the "No Child Left Behind" legislation signed by President Bush on January 8, 2002 (< <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov> > and <<http://www.ed.gov>>). Accountability in all its manifestations is advanced as a solution to the ills facing public education in the United States, and teachers in particular must be held responsible for what they do in the classroom. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education is concerned with measuring not only the teacher candidate's knowledge of the teaching field but also how much the teacher candidates' students learn as a result of the instruction they receive. Standards-based programs have become the norm in P-12 and postsecondary education, as evidenced by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (NSFLEP, 1999) and related documents produced by professional organizations of language teachers. And, as if all this were not enough, the nation is facing a formidable teacher shortage in all disciplines. Furthermore, in the state

of Georgia, all the postsecondary institutions combined do not graduate enough foreign language education majors to satisfy the growing demand from the schools. Consequently, school districts are hiring individuals who have target language proficiency but little or no preparation for teaching. Once hired, many look to KSU to help them become fully certified. This factor alone will ensure that non-traditional routes to certification are here to stay. As Chappelle and Eubanks (2001) state, "Alternative education represents the changing face of public education" (p. 314).

Given the fact that alternative preparation of teachers is not going to disappear in the near future, the profession must recognize some basic principles. First, the individuals who enter the foreign language profession with any type of temporary certificate bring a rich linguistic, cultural, and professional background with them. The alternative program must not ignore either their strengths or their weaknesses. Second, the program must consider the qualifications they bring with them and structure their individual program of study accordingly. The needs of an experienced teacher from Bolivia are quite different from those of an accountant who has decided to change professions or an international banker who has retired, but who 25 years ago completed all requirements other than student teaching in an undergraduate foreign language education program. The one qualification they generally share, however, is sufficient command of the target language to allow them to satisfy the language proficiency requirements.

The third component is appropriate mentoring in the school setting, perhaps the weakest link in the sequence leading to full certification. The faculty cannot entirely compensate for a school's inattention to the needs of teachers employed under temporary licenses. Indeed, given the vastly different environments from one school to the next, it is remarkable that so many are still teaching and committed to the profession. Since 1995, Kennesaw State University has recommended 85 individuals for the clear renewable certificate in French, German, Japanese, or Spanish. By contrast, KSU has graduated a total of 36 traditionally prepared students in foreign language education in the same period.

The most striking statistic in the last 7 years is the number of traditionally prepared foreign language teachers graduating from institutions of the University System of Georgia. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data for FY 2000 indicated that all 34 institutions granted a total of 181 Bachelor of Arts degrees in languages, literatures, and linguistics. This figure includes 107 in Spanish, 37 in French, and the remaining 37 in other modern and classical languages. Only 22 diplomas in foreign language education were awarded in public institutions in Georgia in FY 2000 (see "Program Review" at <<http://www.ir.kennesaw.edu/prog>>). This is a pattern established over the last 20 years that will continue indefinitely, just as will the rising demand for foreign language instruction.

Alternative preparation has become a permanent feature of teacher preparation. Although it does have its disadvantages, considering the shortage of teachers,

school districts will surely continue to hire “uncertified” personnel. It is therefore our responsibility as teacher educators to work with these new teachers to ensure that “qualified” teachers are in the classroom. The data from Kennesaw State University clearly point to alternative preparation as a vital part of the future of foreign language education in Georgia. Given the rate at which universities are preparing P-12 foreign language teachers at the undergraduate level, it is obvious that if foreign language instruction has any hope of survival, it depends in part upon the profession’s ability to develop, implement, assess, and sustain viable alternative preparation programs for teachers. Otherwise, when school districts can find neither certified foreign language teachers nor avenues to enable candidates to pursue alternative certification, they will simply eliminate world languages from the curriculum. The present solution, however, is to hire “uncertified” teachers. It is our job to play a role to help ensure their success.

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8

Group Study Abroad and Thematic Units

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Abstract

This article describes the model for a Group Study Abroad Project to Peru for K-12 teachers of Spanish that took place during the summer of 2001. The model has a pre-travel, overseas, and post-travel component. All three are described, with special emphasis on the program exit evaluation and the participants' reactions one year later. Participants were generally positive about their experience, but some expressed a need for more preparation in creating thematic units. Selected units are described in the appendices along with Web site references where readers can find complete lesson plans and e-mail addresses of authors.

Background

Spanish is the second language of the western hemisphere after English and the most frequently taught language in U.S. schools. The standards-based curriculum outlined in the "Alabama Course of Study: Foreign Languages" (Alabama State Dept. of Education, 1998) for elementary through secondary levels recommends that students be exposed to all areas of the Spanish-speaking world. Most current textbooks also attempt to expose students to various cultures; however, most teachers' knowledge of Hispanic cultures is limited to a few countries. They may have had an immersion experience in Spain, Mexico, or possibly even Costa Rica, but it is the rare teacher who has had opportunities to travel and study elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world. Peru, with its geographical contrasts and its diverse population, provides an excellent location for teachers to study the Andean regions of South America. Lima, in particular, is a melting pot of races and a metropolitan area rich in indigenous, European, Asian, and African influences. In addition, the reasonable proximity of deserts, mountains, and rain forests provides opportunities for one to experience the geographical diversity of the region. However, most teachers know little about Peru, have never traveled there, and lack

authentic materials from this area to enrich their curriculum. For this reason the Foreign Language Education program in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Auburn University proposed to take a group of elementary, middle, and high school teachers of Spanish to Peru for a 5-week immersion experience during June and July, 2001. The proposal was accepted, and the funds were provided by the Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad program.

The research to support the model described herein is mostly related to improving proficiency. Generally, teacher proficiency in a foreign language has been shown to improve significantly after a study-abroad experience (Rissel, 1995; Lafayette, 1987; Millman, 1988); however, such improvement is more likely to be significant at the intermediate levels than for speakers at advanced levels or above because of the increasingly larger gains necessary to move up the ACTFL rating scales beyond the intermediate level (Milleret, Stansfield, & Kenyon, 1991). In Rissel's description of a Seminar in Mexican Culture and Language Instruction, she quotes the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers Task Force (1991), which emphasizes the importance of contextualizing instruction with "materials that are actually used by members of the target culture in their everyday lives" (p. 5). Improved cross-cultural effectiveness and teaching effectiveness for teachers in general can often best be achieved by living abroad. In October 1989 the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) published a special issue of *The French Review*, "The Teaching of French: A Syllabus of Competence," and these guidelines provide the following definition of cultural competence:

Cultural competence is based on the concept of a culture as an organic whole made up of values, a grid through which one sees the world, habits of thought and feeling, and habits of interacting with certain social institutions and customs. The present evolution of a culture is strongly influenced by its past, including its proud achievements.

Cultural competence can best be defined as a combination of three interrelated parts: the sociolinguistic ability to communicate, certain areas of knowledge, and certain informed attitudes.

Cultural competence does include a body of knowledge and attitudes that supplements the understanding of a single culture area and its component societies. To be more than an amateur observer, one needs to know how to relate the heterogeneous surface manifestations to underlying core elements. (p. 14)

Objectives

With the aforementioned research and definitions in mind, the project director organized the seminar in Peru based on four objectives. The first was to provide opportunities for participants to improve their level of proficiency in Spanish. To address this objective, we provided homestays in Lima, 4 weeks of intensive exposure to Spanish during classes at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and Spanish-speaking guides for all excursions.

Our second objective was to give participants opportunities to become acquainted with Peru and its culture. To accomplish this objective, we organized a pre-travel workshop that provided teachers with an overview of Peruvian history and politics. At Catholic University, professors offered a series of mini-courses that covered such fields as history, education, literature, music, and authentic foods of Peru. Participants also visited the three regions of Peru: the coast, the sierra, and the rain forest.

The third objective was to provide opportunities for teachers to collect authentic materials to be integrated into interdisciplinary thematic units. During one pre-travel seminar, the program director introduced the curriculum development component of the project. Participants viewed sample thematic units and discussed ideas for topics to research before their arrival in Lima. Once in Peru, participants independently searched for authentic materials that would be appropriate for their topic. These materials were then purchased with funds provided by the grant.

The fourth objective was to encourage teachers to improve their observational skills, specifically to observe the products and practices of Peruvian culture, and to guide them in discovering for themselves the underlying perspectives that may have led to the creation of the products and the behaviors observed in the target culture. During the aforementioned weekend seminar, the director helped participants to understand methods for identifying values and cultural assumptions that drive behaviors in both the native and the target cultures. While living in Peru, the participants read texts that focused on a variety of cultural topics, for example, the use of household space. From these readings and their personal observations, participants reflected on cultural similarities and differences in their daily journals.

Implementation

The 13 finalists consisted of three African-Americans, one Cuban-American, one Spaniard, and seven Anglos ranging in age from 23 to 51. In addition, these teachers represented private and public schools as well as urban, suburban, and rural areas of Alabama and Georgia. The diversity of the group was probably one of its greatest strengths.

The pre-travel component consisted of two weekend seminars. In the first of these the participants received a general overview of Peruvian geography, history, politics, economics, and cultural perspectives. In the second seminar, the program director focused on the curriculum development component of the project. She introduced the participants to ethnographic approaches for exploring culture in the foreign language classroom as well as methods for developing thematic units. The purpose of these units was to provide students opportunities to interact with authentic texts and material culture. In addition, the director introduced participants to methods for creating reading instruction, an integral part of thematic unit preparation.

The in-country component consisted of formal instruction that took place at Catholic University, excursions to explore the diversity of Lima, travel to the three

distinct geographic regions of Peru, and homestay experiences designed to expose participants to daily life in Lima. Further information concerning details of the program is available on the program director's Web site, <www.auburn.edu/~barrmys/fulbright/index.html>.

The post-travel component was an ongoing process that required teachers to use their materials in their own classrooms during the academic year 2001-02. As a kind of action research, teachers were asked to reflect upon the relative success or lack of success of their units as appropriate instructional materials, to revise their units based upon these reflections, and to teach their revised units again in 2002-03. The first step in the process took place at Auburn University during the fall of 2001. In a weekend seminar all participants turned in drafts of their thematic units, presented and distributed selected excerpts from their units, and discussed ways to disseminate their work at various conferences and in-service workshops. One unit addresses the current political context of Peru and asks students to look at the U.S. and Peruvian census (originals of both are used). Other units included the Myths and Legends of Peru, Animals of Peru (for young learners), Geography of Peru, Education in the U.S. and in Peru, Foods of Peru (see Appendix A), Traditional Peruvian Dances, and Family Roles (see Appendix B). The last one was of particular interest to the outside evaluator in that it tackled creatively and comparatively issues of poverty, social class, and human needs, illustrating through case studies of real families how basic needs dictate given behaviors and how those behaviors may differ between cultures.

During the following year, participants revised their units, incorporating comments and suggestions from the project director. Final copies of all thematic units reside in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Auburn University, but samples and e-mail addresses for all the authors are available at <www.auburn.edu/~barrmys/fulbright/results.html>. As a follow-up to the formal evaluation completed during the fall seminar of 2001, participants responded to questions posted to a bulletin board on the Web.

Program Exit Evaluation

The outside evaluator for the project attended the weekend seminar at Auburn University in the fall of 2001, interviewed participants, and administered both an open-ended and a quantitative survey to all of them. She reported that overall, participants were positive about almost all aspects of their experience. However, the one weakness that some participants cited was a feeling of inadequacy in terms of curriculum development.

The in-country immersion experience of living with a family, attending lectures at Catholic University, and traveling around Peru were also rated very highly in the written surveys as well as in the independent survey that Auburn University administers to all study-abroad returnees. Because patterns of discontent were almost indiscernible in the surveys, the outside evaluator spoke individually to all participants. During these conversations, she realized that the group had coalesced

well and had worked out differences in a mature manner, unlike her experience with other Group Study Abroad (GSA) projects. She speculated that the extensive preplanning with Catholic University and the careful selection process were probably keys to the lack of discontent.

This outside evaluator reported that the project's 13 teacher participants met the objectives in differing ways and to differing degrees. All participants reported having learned a great deal about the history, geography, culture, politics, and economics of Peru. They also felt that the formal instruction received both in the orientation seminar and at Catholic University would help them to better present an authentic picture of Peru in their own classrooms. Although on the Auburn University International Education survey some participants complained of being in classes too many hours each day, others concluded that without the extensive area studies component, they would not have had the depth of knowledge necessary to collect appropriate materials or create interdisciplinary thematic units.

Both the project director and the outside evaluator concluded that the group made the least gains in the area of effective cultural observation. For example, some complained that lectures were not always as well planned as they could have been or that professors in their Spanish classes seemed unwilling to change their traditional approach to language teaching in order to accommodate participants' demands for more hands-on activities. These problems as well as differences in testing procedures seemed to create stress for some participants. However, with some probing from the director, they were able to analyze their reactions and to understand that the teachers were behaving in a culturally conditioned manner appropriate for a Peruvian university. Nor did they realize that such behavior might have resulted from the fact that professors in Peru work at several different jobs simultaneously.

Reflections: One Year Later

During the summer of 2002, the project director created a bulletin board on the Web, where she posted reflective questions in order to collect participant response to the project. Participants' reflections concerning their thematic units varied greatly. However, the difference in satisfaction tended to follow two strands. The most satisfied teachers were those who were the most familiar with creating their own instructional materials via thematic units. Also, teachers of upper-level classes found it easier to collect authentic materials that were appropriate for their classes than did those who taught lower levels. Teachers of upper-level classes commented that the authentic reading selections in their units engaged students and provided them with opportunities to improve their vocabularies and to learn a great deal about Peru. Teachers of lower levels had greater difficulty finding authentic materials related to a specific topic. Perhaps their lack of knowledge concerning the teaching of reading at lower levels contributed to this problem. Again, this observation seems to underline the weakness of the program in terms of teacher preparation.

When participants were asked if the experience in Peru made them more effective in the classroom, there was general agreement that it did. One participant mentioned that the uniqueness of the experience, the material studied, and its delivery in a Latin American mode had a great deal of impact on his thinking about language instruction. He said, "I became acutely aware of my own deficits and [was] therefore better able to improve." Another teacher remarked that in preparing her thematic unit, she was encouraged to use different strategies for reading activities. She now understands the importance and value of incorporating different types of reading tasks as well as tasks that require students to react to the text. Previously her students tended to translate, but with the inclusion of better tasks, her students' communication skills have improved, and they feel more confident in their ability to read. Several teachers mentioned that because of the diversity of the group, the shared knowledge among participants helped them to add many new and creative ideas to their repertoire.

Most participants reported that their language skills had improved. The different contexts in which they had to use their language provided the most important reason for improvement, according to several participants. For example, one person mentioned the time spent with the *acompañantes*, the native Spanish-speaking companions provided by Catholic University. Many others cited their conversations with taxi drivers who were frequently highly educated, but unemployed—a common problem in Peru, where the economy cannot absorb all of those with college degrees. A number of participants felt that their listening ability was greatly improved because of the number of hours of listening to area study lectures and to Spanish videos in classrooms, "where they had to block out all of the noise pollution from the reverberations off the walls." Even those who began the experience with a high level of proficiency said that they learned many new words used exclusively in the Andean region. One person referred to "those wonderful 'ch' words" that have been absorbed into Spanish from the indigenous languages of the region. Even those who felt their language skills had reached a plateau felt revitalized by using their language in the target environment.

Participants were in total agreement concerning the increased knowledge they now have with respect to various aspects of Peruvian culture. One aspect frequently mentioned related to education. Some participants reported that lectures on education, as well as visits to various schools, both private and public, helped them to develop a broad perspective of the educational system. All participants expressed their new-found understanding of Peru in different ways. The following observation seems to sum up the feelings of all the participants with respect to their understanding of Peru:

It would have been impossible for my understanding of Peru not to have improved on our adventure. I suppose that statement speaks both to the wealth of my ignorance and the value of this opportunity. And yet all I gained by planning and determination pales compared to what I learned by happenstance, by being present.

Another participant follows in the same vein: “Culture is a concept that can never be fully understood without the opportunity to absorb it. I’m glad to have had the opportunity to absorb just the tip of the iceberg.”

Director’s Suggestion

As director of the project, I think the criteria created for selecting finalists served us well; however, it might have been useful for us to have known more about our applicants’ knowledge of theory and instructional design during the selection process. For example, we had one participant whose proficiency in Spanish was at the intermediate-low level, a fact that led to considerable frustration for this person in Spanish classes at Catholic University. This problem was not unexpected; however, the same person had received an alternative teaching certificate and, therefore, little preparation in methods of teaching foreign languages. The arrangements we had made did not allow for such individual differences. Therefore, to improve the process, I would suggest a follow-up telephone interview with all finalists and alternates in order to gather more information as to their potential for professional development and leadership.

An extremely useful experience for all the participants was our visit to the American Embassy, where we were given an excellent orientation and many useful suggestions concerning safety precautions. This visit, arranged and coordinated with help from the Fulbright Commission in Lima, should be a suggested excursion for all Group Study Abroad projects. This project tried to include the participation of *acompañantes*; however, this aspect of the program could have been better organized with more opportunities for the *acompañantes* and the Americans to interact and to explore the city. The *acompañantes* were students at Catholic University majoring in the teaching of English or Spanish as a Foreign Language. Perhaps, a different population might have had more free time and more extensive knowledge in order to help participants find the materials for their units as well as to give them a more balanced view of the city.

Finally, I would suggest that more time be set aside during the in-country component to help participants with the preparation of their units. There were two blocks of 2 hours each set aside for supervised work on units during the last week of classwork at Catholic University. However, participants needed considerably more time to discuss reading theory and practical applications. Because they were all experienced teachers except for the graduate assistant, I assumed that two sessions before we left, coupled with appropriate readings, would suffice. However, it turned out that most of the participants needed a great deal more help than the director had anticipated. Therefore, I would suggest that every week participants have at least one 3-hour session to present a text they have chosen and for which they have written appropriate instructional activities. Critiques of these activities should help all participants to improve their skills.

Summary

This project was developed in order to improve the language proficiency and the cultural competence of K-12 Spanish teachers, and we were generally successful in meeting these goals. Because Peru's culture is strongly influenced by its past and the achievements of its indigenous cultures and because the project presented Peru's historical past effectively through lectures coordinated with excursions to historical sites and museums, participants were able to demonstrate increased knowledge in these areas. Because participants encountered a culture whose language is a mixture of Spanish and indigenous languages with many idiomatic expressions unique to Peru, all of them, even those who had arrived in Peru with native or near-native proficiency, were able to enrich their sociolinguistic ability to communicate. However, a high level of cultural competence is unattainable without effective observations that relate the products and practices of a given culture to its underlying perspectives. In this respect, participants did not demonstrate the growth we would have liked. Most participants gave almost no examples in their journals of how underlying "core elements" were driving the behaviors they observed. Perhaps they were so intrigued by the culture of Peru that they neglected to ask themselves the important question, "Why?" Therefore, future Group Study Abroad Programs might seek better ways to help participants ask themselves the probing questions necessary to discover the underlying perspectives that drive culture-bound behaviors.

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Appendices

While participants were in Peru, they purchased authentic materials with funds granted by the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Programs. Upon their return to the United States, they completed thematic units and submitted them to the project director for approval. The units described on the next pages have all been edited by the project director and her graduate teaching assistants for publication at <www.auburn.edu/~barrmys/fulbright/index.html>. Those interested in viewing complete lesson plans and texts will find samples by perusing the aforementioned URL.

Appendix A

Foods of Peru *Beatriz Gastón Skeens*

This unit, appropriate for Spanish II or III, includes a short story, “En las Punas,” a legend about the origin of the potato, advertisements from Peruvian grocery stores, and a set of Peruvian recipes. All texts are accompanied by a variety of instructional activities.

“En las Punas,” is a children’s story written by the Centro de Documentación en Información de Literatura Infantil. Through the story, the students will visualize the way of living for a family in the “Punas,” the cold, Andean regions of Peru. The story depicts family life, shared work, a love for animals, frugal foods, and the beauty of nature within the context of the Andean culture. The students will predict, paraphrase, analyze vocabulary and grammar, answer questions about the story, compare and contrast the lives of the people of the sierra and their own, as well as write their own story. The teacher will set the time for the lesson, 2 days or more, depending on the students’ knowledge of vocabulary.

“El origen de la papa,” is a legend passed down through generations of people living in the Andean region of Peru. The instruction that accompanies this legend is designed to review the preterite and imperfect and to help students locate the grammatical subjects in a reading that relies principally on synonyms and bridge-

ing inferences to maintain cohesion. In addition, students will discuss the ways they like to eat potatoes utilizing an information exchange task.

Shopping for groceries in Peru provides pictures and advertisements of real grocery stores and typical Peruvian foods. Students discuss healthy eating habits with the use of a food pyramid. They also keep a log in Spanish of their eating habits for a week. Students use the Internet to look up monetary exchange rates and to calculate exchanging their dollars into *soles*. Finally, students shop for a week's worth of groceries for a Peruvian family. Additional advertisements can be found at <www.ewong.com>, where E. Wong's, one of the largest chains of grocery stores in Peru, maintains a site where patrons can shop on line.

For the section on Peruvian cooking, "La cocina peruana," the author uses recipes from a Peruvian cookbook in order to enable students to develop cultural awareness while increasing language skills. Students recognize and use food vocabulary specific to four Peruvian recipes. After the teacher and students demonstrate one of the recipes, students read the remainder of the recipes and complete a variety of vocabulary-building exercises that provide guided interaction with the text. They also decide such things as which recipe is the easiest to prepare, the most complicated to prepare, the costliest to prepare, and so forth. Finally, they explore the Internet for Peruvian recipes and cook for the class. Some Internet sources for student recipes are <www.perucultural.org.pe>, <www.elcomerciope.com.pe>, and <www.caretas.com.pe>.

Appendix B

La familia peruana *Rebecca Layle Brooking*

This unit is appropriate for Spanish IV or V and is particularly useful for an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The Peruvian family is an anthropological theme that engages students in instructional activities involving a number of other disciplines: reading, science and health, art, math, social studies, language arts, and music. Of course, all texts and activities are in the target language.

In Lesson #1, students define what it means to be a family and identify the roles and responsibilities they associate with the idea of family. They put together a collage of Peruvian families with pictures provided by the teacher. In small groups students develop a mutually accepted definition of *family*, using questions provided by the teacher as a guide. Collaboratively, students and teacher categorize their ideas and create a chart, graph, or picture to summarize succinctly the ideas of each group. Using Maslow's (1998) "Hierarchy of Needs," students decide how the family, as a unit, can help individuals meet these needs. As a continuing task, students begin a journal related to what they are learning in this unit. For the

first entry in their journal, students choose two of the needs listed on Maslow's Hierarchy and explain how their own families help them to meet those needs.

In Lesson #2 students gain an understanding of the variety of physical environments in Peru, and how these different environments affect the ways in which families meet their needs. Using a large map of Peru, the teacher talks about the three main geographical regions in Peru: *la selva* [tropical rainforest], *la sierra* [the Andes mountains], and *la costa* [the coast]. She describes the climate, the distinctive geographical features, the resources, and so forth. Resources for this lesson are readily available on the Internet and in books and magazines. Students hypothesize as to how families living in these three distinct geographical environments might meet their basic needs. The class divides into three groups, with each group responsible for one geographical region. Students decide which of their hypotheses have been confirmed, which seem to be incorrect, and which are still not answered. Each group will present its findings to the class. The journal entry for this lesson presents two options. Students may write a summary describing how families in each of the three regions meet their basic needs, or they may develop a hypothesis concerning one of their unanswered questions and do research to find the answer(s).

The purpose of Lesson #3 is for students to become acquainted with three Peruvian families in the vicinity of Lima through pictures and a description of their daily routines. Before reading the Spanish texts, students fill in a chart with information about their own family's daily routine. On this chart they must mention what each family member does at designated hours during the day. Again the class divides into three groups, and each group receives a reading about one of three Peruvian families that they will describe to the rest of the group. First, students scan the reading, highlighting a few action words; then they read their selection using the "dictionary" (a teacher-created reading aid) as needed. With this dictionary, students problem solve to find the correct meaning by deciding which of four possible definitions does not fit a family of words or phrases (see Smith, 1981). The definition will be the one that does not belong in the same family of words, as in the example below.

- Una combi es ...* [A combi is ...]
- a. *un vegetal pequeño* [a small vegetable]
 - b. *una fruta pequeña* [a small fruit]
 - c. *un postre pequeño* [a small dessert]
 - d. *un autobús pequeño* [a small bus]

After reading the text, students complete a chart for their Peruvian family similar to the one they previously created for their own family. Students refer to Maslow's (1998) "Hierarchy of Needs" in order to decide whether the Peruvian family is meeting those needs, who is helping to meet them, as well as how and whether the response to the need is adequate in their opinion. Finally, each group

presents their family to the class, being sure to address the required questions in their packet. The journal entry for this lesson requires students to describe briefly the three Peruvian families presented in class and to choose one in order to make comparisons between their own families and the Peruvian family as well as to explain what factors they think play a part in the ability of these families to meet their needs adequately.

In Lesson #4, students enjoy two Peruvian songs related to the theme of family: "Hijo" by Alicia Maguiña and "Amor de madre" by Los Embajadores Criollos. They will discuss the songs in terms of tone, theme, and content and will analyze their content with regard to the relationship between mother and child. Students listen to "Hijo," a repetitive song with few verses and with standard vocabulary. The teacher asks what their initial impressions are: What is the tone of the song? What might it be about? Why do they think so? Students listen to the song again and write down words or phrases they understand. With this list on the board, students are asked whether their ideas about the theme of the song have changed. Then, students read the lyrics of the song and answer true-or-false question about the content, and this activity is followed by a final discussion of tone and theme. Next students listen to "Amor de madre," a faster and more complex song, decide on first impressions concerning the tone, and make predictions about the content, basing their reactions on the tone and the title. During the second and third review of the song, students complete a cloze activity, after which potentially difficult words are addressed with a dictionary activity. Students listen to the song again and come up with emotions that seem to characterize the speaker's feelings in both songs. They must cite evidence from the lyrics to support their choices of emotions. The journal entry for this lesson requires that students discuss what these two songs say about the strength and importance of the bond between mothers and their children.

In Lesson #5, students generate a list of children's rights on the board and develop a title for their list. The teacher introduces the 1989 document developed by the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Children (Flores & Porras, 2000, p. 21) and makes a short list of the 10 rights included in that document. Students then check to see if any of these appear on the class list. After a short discussion of social problems in general, the teacher divides students into three groups and assigns each of them a different passage from *Nueva crónica del Perú, Siglo XX* (Macera & Forns, 2000), an ethnographic text that chronicles social problems affecting children and their families in Peru. A black-and-white drawing for each text illustrates the problem. Each group works through the reading tasks assigned to their particular text, and afterwards they present their problem to the rest of the class, following the guidelines given and proposing solutions. For their journal response they choose between two options. They may write a summary of the social problems discussed in class or describe their reactions to them.

For the final lesson, students read a legend from the jungles of Peru, "Ayaymama." The teacher begins with a visualization activity in which she describes a scene, while the students listen with their eyes closed. Students then

draw a picture of the scene just described to them, and afterwards, they share and describe their pictures in small groups. After their visualization activity, students read the first section of the story and stop to make a prediction about what will happen next. Class members share and discuss these predictions before they continue reading the second half of the story; then they check to see if their predictions were correct. After reading the entire story, they fill in a story map and try to decide what this legend is trying to explain.

Finally, students create a children's book, using the words from the legend. The drawings for the book depict the important events as they appear on their story maps. Next they decide which words will go with each drawing and who is responsible for making each drawing. Each pair or group does only one page, so that the book belongs to the entire class. In their journal responses, students write their own endings for the legend.

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